# Leaders of Israel

George L. Robinson

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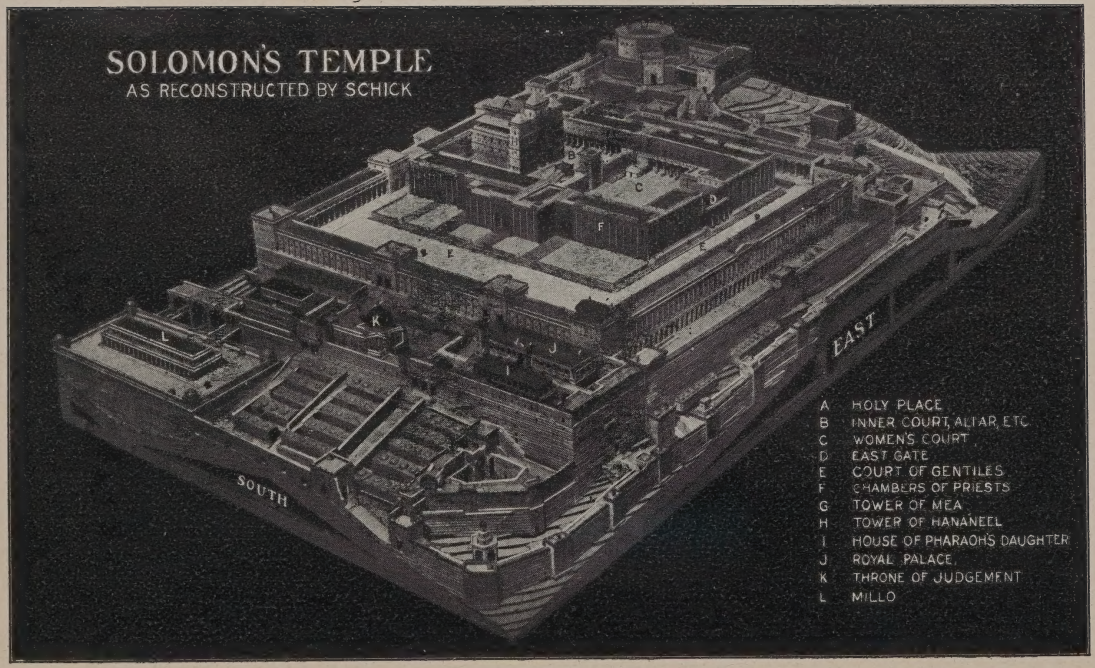
# LEADERS OF ISRAEL


SOLOMON'S TEMPLE
AS RECONSTRUCTED BY SCHICK
EAST
SOUTH
A HOLY PLACE
B INNER COURT, ALTAR, ETC.
C WOMEN'S COURT
D EAST GATE
E COURT OF GENTILES
F CHAMBERS OF PRIESTS
G TOWER OF MEA
H TOWER OF HANANEEL
I HOUSE OF PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER
J ROYAL PALACE
K THRONE OF JUDGEMENT
L MILLO

# LEADERS OF ISRAEL

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE HEBREWS

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE DOWNFALL OF JERUSALEM, A. D. 70

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BY

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TO MY WIFE

WHOSE INTEREST, SYMPATHY AND SELF-SACRIFICE
HAVE MADE ITS PRODUCTION POSSIBLE
THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS
AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED.

# PREFACE

THOMAS CARLYLE'S remark that "the history of the world is composed of the biographies of its great men" is particularly true of Israel. Accordingly, we have endeavored to correlate about some twenty-four outstanding "Leaders" the principal events of Old Testament history from the earliest times to the overthrow of Jerusalem by Titus in the year 70 A. D.

The constant aim has been to assist the student who wishes *to blaze his way,* so to speak, through the Old Testament and trace the events chronologically. This brief epitome, therefore, having been written with a definite purpose, and according to a prescribed plan, is not intended to be exhaustive, but suggestive. The Bible account should, section by section, be read first; for, while the story is so written as to be read continuously it is directly contrary to our intention to take the Bible out of the reader's hands.

In our attitude, we have endeavored to be constructive. Mere theories have found no place, but facts have been welcomed from every source, critical and archæological. The scriptural quotations are taken from the American Revised Version, Standard Edition, which we commend most cordially to the student as the very best English version of the Bible yet made. Numerous maps and charts have been inserted as a possible help to the reader. A simple, one-page diagram sometimes conveys more information than could be expressed by words in an entire chapter. For the plan illustrating "The Hebrew Conception of the Universe" the author is indebted to his

former pupil and friend, the Rev. Lewis Gaston Leary, Ph.D., who has likewise kindly read all the proof-sheets. To many others, also, especially to those whose names appear in the text, the author gladly acknowledges his debt. Frequent quotations from recognized authorities were deemed desirable by the Committee. The questions which follow the various daily lessons have been appended in order to stimulate personal investigation and spiritual introspection. The student should always remember that the Scriptures must be studied as they were written—by the help of God's Holy Spirit. Only thus may he expect to appreciate their power.

GEORGE L. ROBINSON.

CHICAGO, September 1, 1906.

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## STUDY I.

### The Ancestors of Israel (Gen. 1—11).

*1st Day: The Creation of Man.*

Read Gen. 1:1—2:3.

1. The Old Testament opens as the New Testament closes—with revelation. The first eleven chapters of Genesis supply a kind of apocalyptic preface to the history of God's chosen people, describing, by means of inspired tradition, how the earth was created and peopled, and how its inhabitants sinned and were punished. "The stream of sacred history rises among the hills of God" (Strachan).

2. In the "Vision of Creation" (1:1—2:3) two particularly important truths are emphasized: one, the doctrine of God, majestic, pre-existent and personal; the other, the dignity of man, created "in the image of God"—*i.e.*, self-conscious, free to choose, having dominion, moral, and therefore, allied to God.

3. The account begins with a solemn announcement that God is the First Great Cause, which strikes the key-note of the whole, and excludes at once both materialism and pantheism. Note how many times the Divine fiat goes forth, "And God said" (vs. 3, 6, 9 ff.), and that it always introduces some new fundamental law of wide significance. The process of creation is described as progressive, secondary causes being only hinted at (vs. 11, 20, 24); this allows for theistic evolution. "Creation was a work, not an act" (Maclaren).

4. In order to accommodate it to human capacity, the whole picture is set in a framework of "seven days." The word "day" is employed with marvelous elasticity, some-

times standing for twelve hours (vs. 5, 14 a), sometimes for twenty-four hours (vs. 14 b, Exod. 20:11), and in Gen. 2:4 for the whole creative week; suggesting that the author intended to teach *order* rather than geology.

5. The climax is reached in the sixth day, when the species "man" is created—the most needy of all God's creatures. Hitherto God had *commanded,* but in man's case he deliberated. He also "blessed" him with the power of propagation and the right of dominion. Then he took a final survey of His work, and declared it "very good," *i.e.,* adapted to the end in view; and He further sanctified

**THE ANCIENT HEBREW CONCEPTION OF THE UNIVERSE**

TO ILLUSTRATE THE ACCOUNT OF CREATION AND THE FLOOD

the Sabbath, to teach that man, too, should celebrate God's works one day in seven. The account plainly bears the stamp of revelation.

What impression does a careful reading of the story make on an unprejudiced mind?

*2d Day: Adam, His Nature and Destiny.*

Read Gen. 2:3—3:24.

1. With the formula, "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth," in 2:4, the transition is made from the "Vision of Creation" to the story of man's nature and destiny. Whether we treat of what follows as a "second account of creation" or not, it is sufficiently obvious that the author assumes what is related in chapter 1, and adds much that is new. Man is no longer the mere end of creation, but the center. He was moulded "out of dust," and is therefore mortal; but God also "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life," and he became thereby immortal.

2. Ordained to labor, though a citizen of Paradise, he was forbidden to eat of the tree of knowledge on pain of beginning a process which would end in death. Lonely, "he fell asleep longing for a companion" (Delitzsch). When he awoke, a mental and spiritual complement had been provided for him; and marriage, the most sacred and tender of human relationships, is instituted, the original and normal form of which is monogamy.

3. Temptation assails the innocents. In the guise of a crafty serpent, the tool and symbol of Satan, God's prohibition to Adam is distorted, His goodness impeached, and His motives challenged. Eve listens, and the serpent has won a victory. "Our security against sin consists in our being shocked at it" (Newman). Eve sinned through curiosity—deceived; Adam deliberately—persuaded. Rebellion against God's will is the very essence of sin. The inevitable results were shame and avoidance of God.

There is a consistency in sin. "One act of sin gives birth to conscience" (Dods).

4. The divine investigation and condemnation follow. Perpetual antagonism between good and evil is decreed. Victory, however, will come through bruising (3:15). Here is the germ of all subsequent Messianic prediction.

5. The curtain falls upon our first parents, expelled from the Garden. Innocence was lost; but holiness still remained attainable. There is a divine philosophy in the picture which is as true as truth itself.

What compound name for Deity is used in this section? What is its probable significance? See Exod. 34:6, 7.

*3d Day: Cain and the Spread of Civilization.*

Read Gen. 4.

1. Sin developed rapidly, producing most deteriorating effects upon mankind. Of the two sons born to Adam, one became an agriculturist, the other a shepherd. In process of time, both offered a "present" to Jehovah; but Cain's was marred by selfishness and want of faith (Look up Heb. 11:4). Abel expected nothing; Cain, tenfold. Abel greatly prospered thereafter, and Cain became jealous, dejected and vexed.

2. Yet God warned Cain to control his temper, explaining to him how sin, like a monster beast crouching at one's door, ever lies in wait to devour. But Cain allowed his evil passion to get the better of him and, when opportunity came, rose up and slew his brother. Thus Cain took the side of "the serpent," and human sin made gigantic advance. Adam's sin was only against God: Cain's was against God and man. "When men break away from God, they soon murder one another" (Maclaren). Envy was Cain's chief fault: few men ever confess envy.

3. Adam was banished from Paradise: Cain from Eden (4:16). He despairs at the outlook, and pleads for a miti-

gation of his curse on the ground that whosoever findeth him will slay him (4:14). This is one of the proof-texts for the theory of "Pre-Adamites"; but probably it only shows how Cain's evil imagination peopled an unpeopled world.

4. Civilization follows the line of Cain's descendants, but it is not unaccompanied by evils. Cain apparently marries his sister; for one of the fundamental doctrines of the Bible is the unity of race—a thought both humbling and elevating. He "builds a city," literally "an enclosure." Lamech degenerates into polygamy, yet he begets three sons of genius. One becomes the "instructor" of nomadic herdsmen; another, the inventor of musical instruments; a third, the forger of all kinds of metal implements and instruments of war.

5. But "civilization has never kept pace with religion" (Delitzsch). Lamech's boastful, Titanic arrogance, expressed in 4:23, 24, which is the oldest snatch of poetry in the Bible, shows how Cain's envious spirit developed into a murderous lust for war. With this, Cain's line is dropped by the historian, because its fortunes had no direct bearing on the history of redemption; the formal worship of Jehovah being inaugurated not by the Cainites, but by the family of Shem.

Note that "sin" is first mentioned in this chapter.

Are you fighting the Cain spirit?

*4th Day: Enoch and Immortality.*

Glance over Gen. 5.

1. Cain's descendants devoted themselves to the mechanical arts; Seth's cultivated worship. Many links in the genealogical chain are doubtless missing, for the words "son" and "begat" are probably used with the greatest possible latitude.

2. There is absolutely no reliable chronology before the time of Abraham. The genealogical lists of Gen. 5 and

11 furnish the only data, and to draw chronological inferences from these is precarious in the extreme. Their purpose was rather to show the character of the heroes of those days. Between the Creation and the Flood there may have intervened hundreds of thousands of years. These genealogies convey, indeed, the general impression that an immense antediluvian population existed, reaching back through unrecorded periods; but the lists are "so elastic that they may be commodiously stretched to fit any reasonable demand of time."

3. Another impression given by these genealogies is that men attained to far greater ages in those times than now; and, within limits, this impression is probable and justifiable, for was not man originally intended to be immortal? Sin had not yet wrought its dire effect upon the race, and the original strength of man was only beginning to be exhausted. All the great historians of antiquity, such as Herodotus, Hesiod, Pliny, Diodorus Siculus and Josephus, agree that human life was of much greater duration in antique times than now.

4. Yet even then the pathetic death knell, "and he died," is heard repeatedly. To this there was but one exception, Enoch, who, alone of all the line of Seth, has a personality. He "walked with God"; that is, he walked in the same direction, and in harmonious agreement and fellowship with God, keeping step with Him. The most notable feature implied in his biography was his moral character, which led to immortality. He "was not," because he walked with God. Having walked with God, God naturally took him. Thus life and immortality were brought to light as fully as was possible or necessary at this early stage of the world.

From Adam to Noah were how many generations?

Have the two genealogies in Gen. 4 and 5 any names in common?

## ANCIENT CHRONOLOGY

*5th Day: Noah, "The Solitary Saint."*

Glance over Gen. 6:1—9:11.

1. Even among the descendants of Seth an increase of population brought with it an increase of wickedness. Ignoble unions took place between divine beings and mortal men. Read Jude 6, 7. From these sprang a race of giants; whereupon Jehovah resolved that His Spirit—the same that quickened chaos (1:2)—should not longer be humbled by tabernacling for hundreds of years in human flesh, but that the span of life should be limited to one hundred and twenty years.

2. Amid the universal apostasy of the age, Noah alone found grace. Like Enoch, he, too, "walked with God" (6:9), and was doubtless a rare pattern of piety for his time. Accordingly, when Jehovah determined to destroy degenerate men by means of a flood, Noah, knowing the mind of God, "prepared an ark to the saving of his house."

3. The story is too familiar to need rehearsal. It is doubtless a reminiscence of some violent catastrophe which actually took place in antiquity. There is certainly no sufficient reason for doubting the possibility of such an occurrence. It falls within the course of human history, and the fate of actual men lies probably at its base. Besides, the fact that in the literatures of almost all ancient peoples, excepting Egypt, there exists a similar tradition, is most naturally accounted for by admitting that there was at one time a universal deluge. But this does not imply that the uninhabited portions of earth were flooded. The deluge was no correction of creation, but of men; it furnishes a dividing line between two eras of the world. By means of it the old order was swept away and a new order was introduced.

4. The catastrophe being over, Noah sacrifices to Jehovah, and is assured that "seedtime and harvest" and the fixity of the seasons shall never cease. Indeed, Jehovah

# CHRONOLOGY OF THE FLOOD

(Genesis 7 & 8)

370 DAYS

| 150 DAYS | 74 DAYS | 90 DAYS | 56 DAYS |
|---|---|---|---|
| Period of Rain and High Flood [7:24] | Ark Stranded [8:4] | Mts. gradually appear [8:5] | Earth drying off [8:13] |
| 1. It rains 40 days [7:4, 12, 17]<br>2. Waters at maximum 150 days less 40 = 110 days | Waters subsiding but as yet no land in sight [8:3-5] | 1. Raven sent forth 40 days after Mts. first seen [8:6, 7]<br>2. Three doves sent forth at intervals of 7 days [8:10, 12] | 1. Covering of Ark removed<br>2. Earth still too wet to leave Ark [8:13, 14] |

covenants that a universal deluge shall never again take place; and, as a token that He will remember his promise, He appoints the rainbow a new significance. "Man might forget His *word,* but he cannot fail to see His *bow*" (Parker). Thus "the deluge was an act both of judgment and salvation."

What great lesson is taught by the story of the Flood?

*6th Day: Shem, the Son of Special Promise.*

Glance over Gen. 9:18—11:9.

1. Of Noah's three sons, Shem seems to have been the most religious. "Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Shem" (9:26, 27), is his father's oracle of promise to him—a sort of Messianic forecast of his spiritual destiny. Japheth, too, received a benediction; but Ham is cursed. Ham was obviously a filthy sensualist: for did he not rejoice in the exposure of his father's shame? "The bearing of men toward the sins of others is always a touchstone of character" (Dods).

2. The ethnographical "Table of Nations" in Gen. 10, which has been called "a vast cemetery of dead names," is of great interest to the modern anthropologist. While it is not strictly a scientific classification of the races of mankind, it nevertheless traces with comparative accuracy all the principal nations of antiquity back to the three original families which sprang from Shem, Ham and Japheth, namely, the Shemitic, Turanian and Aryan. Of course, many of the names in the list are tribal rather than individual; for example, "Sidon," "Amorite," etc. They seem also to be arranged geographically, beginning with those in the north.

3. That Canaan and Mizraim (Egypt) should be reckoned as descendants of Ham, whereas neither the Canaanites nor the Egyptians spoke a Hamitic language, is probably due to the fact that they were Hamitic in blood, but spoke a Semitic language. A similar solution is possible

for Elam, who is classified as a son of Shem, but who never spoke, so far as is known, a Semitic tongue.

4. The greatest difficulty arises when it is attempted to reduce to one all the great families of human speech. Philology is here supplemented by the story of the "Tower of Babel," which has been called the "astronomical observatory" of the Babylonians. It tells us that when men became ambitious, and impiously sought to scale the celestial Olympus, God frustrated their purpose by confounding their speech and scattering them; the impression conveyed being that diversity of tongues is regarded both as a punishment of self-assertion and as a salutary barrier to prevent men from combining for wicked purposes.

Along what line lies your greatest ambition? Is it sanctified?

*7th Day: Suggestions in Review of Chapters* 1-11.

Read Gen. 11:10-26.

1. Enough has now been related about the origin of the universe and man to satisfy human curiosity, keep the mind in the right attitude toward God, and show Israel's place among the nations. With Adam and Eve are associated the beginnings of temptation; temptation being depicted as subtle as a serpent, of which Owen says: "It can outclimb a monkey, outswim a fish, outleap a zebra, outwrestle an athlete and crush a tiger."

2. With Cain and his line, it is shown how quickly civilization, where evil is regnant, may terminate in barbarism. In Enoch, we come to the first really good man of any fame in biblical history. Enoch is the first immortal. When the divine forbearance is exhausted, Noah saves himself and his household. He builds the first "altar" mentioned in the Bible (8:20), and is the first to enter into "covenant" relationship with God (9:9). Finally, in Shem, the Messianic blessing, originally given to the seed of the woman, is narrowed to one family, the

Shemitic, from whom sprang Terah, the father of Abraham, the Hebrew.

3. Now, much of the material contained in these early chapters of Genesis was probably handed down, orally, from generation to generation, before it was taken up by the inspired writer and made a vehicle of revelation. Certain parallel accounts, particularly of the Creation and the Flood, are found among the Babylonian records; but, for purposes of revelation, they are hardly to be compared with the Hebrew accounts, because so grossly polytheistic.

4. But is the Hebrew narrator true to fact when he represents that the race steadily degenerated from the beginning onward? Whatever may be our answer to this question, it should be observed that the universal effect of sin is degeneration, and that it is not explicitly stated in Chapter 2 *at what point* in the process of man's formation his spiritual nature was given him; whether, for example, God breathed into a mass of fresh clay the breath of life, or into matter already organized. The great essential truth taught is that all spiritual, mental and physical life is from God. Evolution has never yet accounted for the origin of *life*.

Note how many times the heading "These are the generations of" occurs in these chapters. Look up 2:4, 5:1, 6:9, 10:1, 11:10.

## STUDY II.

### Abraham, the Pioneer of Faith (Gen. 11:27—25:11).

*1st Day: Abraham's Call and Migration.*

Read Gen. 11:27—12:9.

1. Abraham, Jacob and Joseph are the three great "leaders" in pre-Mosaic history; the first is called "the friend of God" (look up Jas. 2:23, Isa. 41:8, 2 Chron. 20:7); the second was surnamed "Israel" (see Gen. 32:28); the third became the saviour of the patriarchal household in time of famine.

2. Abraham was a Babylonian. When he left Ur of the Chaldees, Terah, his father, accompanied him as far as Haran, but Terah started too late; he died in Haran. Abraham crossed over the Euphrates, and thereafter was known as "the Hebrew" (14:13), which, literally, means "the Crosser." Nahor, his brother, followed as far as Haran (24:10). Great is the power of example.

3. At that time (ca. 2250 B. C.), north Babylonia was greatly disturbed by an invading people known as the Kassites. But it was neither fear, "nor poverty, nor love of adventure, nor the migratory spirit of his age, that impelled Abraham to quit his native land" (Strachan). On the contrary, his "migration from Mesopotamia was the starting point of a higher faith" (Ottley). One wonders how he spent those seventy-five silent years in Ur!

4. Abraham was called of God. Seven generous promises are made him ere he starts (12:1-3): country, nationality, happiness, greatness, service, protection, and, what is most important of all, that he should become a blessing to others. "In thee shall all the families of the earth," literally, "bless themselves" (v. 3); that is, "other peoples

will wish for themselves the same blessings as those Abraham and his seed are seen to enjoy" (Davidson).

5. Abraham renounced everything in Ur in order to accept God's offer in Canaan. "It is only with renunciation," Carlyle reminds us, "that life, properly speaking, can be said to begin." He left a certainty for an uncertainty. Turn to Heb. 11:9, and you will discover the secret of his life: it was faith. Faith is sure of its destination. "Faith is a state of soul in which the things of God become glorious certainties" (F. W. Robertson). Abraham was the first great apostle of faith.

6. Upon arriving in Canaan, he pitched his tent and built an altar; whereupon God renewed His gracious promise, and Abraham was assured that he was on the right road. "God calls no man to a life of self-denial for its own sake" (Drummond).

What do you understand by a call of God?

*2d Day: Abraham's Sojourn in Egypt.*

Read Gen. 12:10—13:18.

1. Famine in Canaan drove Abraham down into Egypt. It was during the twelfth dynasty, when intercourse between Egypt and Palestine was frequent. Abraham went on his own responsibility. He should first have counseled with God; for, "when he got into Egypt, he got into trouble" (Parker).

2. To protect Sarah and secure for himself a chance to escape, he resorted to expediency, declaring that she was his sister. How it must have chagrined Abraham to have been rebuked by a heathen for untruthfulness! God, however, did not utterly disgrace him by sending him back to Haran. He only disciplined him, "in order to teach him that in morals as well as in geometry a straight line is the shortest distance between two given points" (Strachan).

3. Ejected by Pharaoh as unworthy of citizenship in

MAP
TO ILLUSTRATE THE
MIGRATION OF
ABRAHAM

Egypt, Abraham returned with Lot to the South country —that portion of Palestine which lies between Beersheba and Kadesh, southwest of the Dead Sea. Both were "rich" in cattle and tents. When they removed to Bethel, the thin soil of the highlands was unable to furnish sufficient pasturage for both, and strife was imminent. But Abraham saw that to bicker and quarrel in the presence of the Canaanites and Perizzites would be disastrous. As peacemaker, therefore, he showed the wisdom of a statesman by offering Lot his choice of the country. Lot chose the magic "Circle" of the Jordan valley, and tented toward Sodom. But it was the unwisest act of his life. It meant "a great estate, but bad neighbors! material glory, but moral shame!" (Parker). Through it he lost his own peace of mind (see 2 Pet. 3:7), his children became corrupt (19:30 ff.), and his property went up in the smoke of Sodom (19:24).

4. Lot's choice was the choice of willing compromise. "An important decision is never an isolated act: it is the epitome of a life." Lot chose for himself; Jehovah chose for Abraham (see 13:14 ff.). "In Abraham, aspiration was predominant; in Lot, ambition. Abraham coveted righteousness, Lot success" (Strachan). Lot's great defect was greed. "Choose well: your choice is brief, and yet endless" (Goethe).

What does Christ teach concerning choice? See Matt. 6:33.

*3d Day: Abraham, the Ideal Warrior.*

Read Gen. 14.

Be sure that the facts of the story are clearly before the mind.

1. The fourteenth chapter of Genesis displays "a surprisingly accurate knowledge of early Babylonian history" (Paton). Whence its source it is difficult to say, but it may be a fragment either of the lost *Book of the Wars of*

*the Lord* mentioned in Num. 21:14, or of some Canaanitish war chronicle. In either case, no more interesting chapter to the archæologist can be found in the Old Testament. It paints Abraham as a successful, unselfish and, therefore, ideal warrior.

2. The story recounts an Elamitic invasion, led by Chedorlaomer, against the kings of Sodom and the other cities of the Plains at the south end (probably) of the Dead Sea—"four kings against five." The invaders gained a complete victory, taking Lot and his goods and departing.

3. An escaped one ran and told Abraham, who then dwelt at Mamre. Speedily the peace-loving patriarch mustered a band of three hundred and eighteen "trained men," enlisted the assistance of three Amorite confederates, pursued the Elamitic conquerors, overtook them at Dan, and rescued Lot and the spoils of Sodom. On his return, he was blessed by Melchizedek, the Priest-king of Jerusalem, who, like Abraham, was a believer in the Most High God, and whose government seems to have been a miniature theocracy. "Genius and grace have no genealogy." Abraham gave him "a tenth of all." "Our liberality is an infallible index of the temperature of our religion" (Strachan). The King of Sodom also, coming out to congratulate him, calculatingly proposed that Abraham give him the persons and keep the goods to himself. But, instead, the magnanimous patriarch absolutely refused to keep anything except the portion which was due to his Amorite confederates.

4. Hence, Abraham is entitled to be called "the ideal warrior": first, because he fought for his brother's freedom; secondly, because he consecrated a portion of the spoils; and thirdly, because he coveted nothing for himself. He was no mercenary soldier. "It was the thought of a brother in chains that stirred his heart" (Strachan).

Under what circumstances may war be justifiable?

*4th Day: Jehovah's Covenant with Abraham.*

Glance over Gen. 15—17.

1. After the battle of the kings, Abraham returned to Mamre; Lot to Sodom, the city of ill-fame. "There is a fatal fascination in sin." To Abraham, who probably lived in dread lest the marauders might return in force to avenge their defeat, "the word of Jehovah" came, saying: "Fear not. I am thy *shield* and thy exceeding great reward." Then follows what Luther calls "the great text of the Book of Genesis": "And he believed in Jehovah, and He reckoned it to him for righteousness" (15:6). These words contain the essence of evangelical faith. Abraham "believed"—that is, he steadied himself by leaning on God; and, in return, God imputed to him character.

2. In the same transaction, God promised Abraham a son. And, in order to ratify His promise by the most solemn religious sanction possible, He bade him divide certain victims (the two portions probably being intended to represent the two contracting parties); and at nightfall He caused the divine presence to pass between them (to symbolize, probably, the assumption on His part of the obligation involved); for no vulture nations would be allowed to defeat God's promises (15:11).

3. But Sarah continued childless. Accordingly, at her own suggestion, Abraham took Hagar, her Egyptian maid, who conceived by him and bore Ishmael. But in hearkening to his wife's counsel Abraham erred.

4. Thirteen years passed, and Jehovah appeared a fifth time unto Abraham, to call him to a higher level of faith. "Walk before me, and be thou perfect," is His word (17:1). Enoch had walked *"with* God" in fellowship; Abraham is commanded to walk *before* Him for His inspection. The result of such a walk would naturally issue in perfection. "To live ever in the Taskmaster's eye" was

Milton's aim. The thought of God's presence made him serious.

5. The renewed covenant was sealed by the ancient rite of circumcision, which custom was thereafter to be invested with religious significance. But the promise of a son by Sarah was at first too incredible. For years Abraham's hopes had centered in Ishmael. In weakness, therefore, he prays: "O that Ishmael might live before Thee!" (17:18). It was a petulant wish. But he soon recognized that his hundred years of waiting were about to be rewarded.

What is faith? See Heb. 11:1.

*5th Day: Abraham's Intercession for Sodom.*

Scan Gen. 18—19.

1. Not long after these things, by the Oaks of Mamre, there stood before the tent of Abraham three celestial visitors. They had come to repeat the promise that Sarah should bear a son. Sarah at first ridiculed the thought, but she was soon shaken out of her doubt.

2. Abraham entertained his guests in Oriental fashion, and later escorted them upon their way as far as the top of a commanding hill, where, overlooking the Cities of the Plain, he was admitted into the Council Chamber of Jehovah. Abraham was God's first official medium of revelation—the first "prophet" (20:7). God's people are always the first to know His will. See Amos 3:7.

3. Sodom, he is informed, is destined to destruction. Abraham at once earnestly intercedes, hoping to arrest the threatened judgment. His prayer, which is strikingly Oriental, is marked by reverence and humility. He pleads: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (18:25) which means: "May God's judgment be recognized as just." Ten righteous persons would have saved Sodom. But there was only one. Wicked men are not infrequently spared for the sake of the righteous.

4. Abraham's guests went on to Sodom, arriving at even. Inquiry must precede judgment. Lot sat at the gate as the keeper of the "guest-room." To-day in Bashan a similar custom prevails, all travelers being entertained gratuitously at the *Medâfeh*, or public inn. A terrible picture follows of the corruption of the city. "Like a swarm of demons let loose from hell," the inhabitants of Sodom beset Lot's house. The city was immoral to the core. Look up Ezek. 16:49 f. Nothing but fire could disinfect so foul a place.

5. Yet Lot contentedly had breathed for years its poisonous atmosphere. Little wonder, therefore, that he "lingered," or that his unnamed wife, who probably was a Sodomite, "looked back," when they were bidden to escape. Lot's heart was with his investments, while her backward glance likewise betrayed the true home of her affection.

"Once gain the mountain-top, and thou art free;
Till then, who rest, presume: who turn to look are lost."
—KEBLE.

Note the rapid growth of sin as portrayed in Genesis up to this point.

*6th Day: The Trial of Abraham's Faith.*

Read carefully Gen. 22.

1. After the destruction of Sodom, Abraham removed to the South Country. There Isaac was born. Soon, however, God called him "to take a still higher degree in the school of faith" (Maclaren). Trial not infrequently brings out one's latent capabilities. "There is no way to self-knowledge except through trial" (Augustine). What precious promise does James give to the man who is tempted? See Jas. 1:12.

2. The demand of God that Abraham should offer Isaac as a burnt-offering seems to cancel all His former promises. Yet Abraham did not demur. The ancient belief was that "the best things belong to God." Though the divine command lacerated his heart, it did not wound his

conscience, as such a command would us to-day. Abraham was a child of his time. Human sacrifices were then a common practice, the idea being rooted in man's craving for atonement. See Micah 6:7. God did not really require it, though at first He commanded it; for at the end He forbade it. What God did require was the sacrifice of Abraham's will.

3. Abraham "rose up early in the morning" and, without ostentation, prepared for the long journey from Beersheba to Mount Moriah. He did not tell even Sarah what was the burden of his heart. "Then men who make sacrifices are not those who talk about them." The journey itself was a test of his faith—a veritable *via dolorosa.* He really *meant* to sacrifice his son.

4. Isaac is seen at his best in this story. Though only a "lad," he was thoughtful, reverent and submissive. It was not the sacrifice of an ignorant boy who was forced to obey. Isaac rather bound *himself* upon his father's altar. Abraham raised his hand, and the deed was virtually done. Isaac could not be sacrificed; he was tainted with sin.

5. Henceforth, to Abraham, Moriah was the mount of vision, and its new name, "Jehovah-jireh," passed into a proverb. For the seventh time, Jehovah promises "to bless" Abraham. Trials lead to visons; sorrows bring revelations. It was his faith, even more than his love, that was tested.

Recount those in Genesis who are said to have offered sacrifices. Can you think of any other human sacrifices in the Old Testament? See Judg. 11:39, and 2 Kings 3:27.

*7th Day: The Death of Abraham.*

Read Gen. 25:1-11; and review hastily Gen. 12—24.

1. Moriah was not an isolated experience in the life of Abraham. From his departure from Ur until he died and was buried in Hebron his life was full of privation and

hardship. He was the first great traveler known to history. Matheson speaks of him as "the forerunner of Duff, of Livingstone, of Moffat, of Carey, of Stanley, and of Nansen."

2. The great outstanding events of his career were his call, his magnanimous treatment of Lot, his victory over the four kings from the far East, his intercession for Sodom, his offering of Isaac, and his purchase of a burial place from the sons of Heth. One regrets that he went down into Egypt; that he twice dissimulated concerning Sarah, to Pharaoh and to Abimelech; and that he took Hagar and Keturah as concubines. Compare Gen. 25:6 with 1 Chron. 1:32.

3. At length he died, an old man, and "full of years," *i.e.,* satisfied. But how could he be satisfied, when Canaan had been promised to him again and again, and he was forced to purchase even a burial lot for his dead? To mortal eyes, it would seem as though God had promised one thing and given another. Yet Abraham was not disappointed. God's promises were not really broken, but enlarged. As Dr. Parker aptly illustrates his case: Promise a boy at five that, if he will learn such and such lessons, he shall have when he is fifteen the finest rocking-horse in the world, and he will begin his lessons with great earnestness and study on, until at fifteen his mind has become so strengthened and his ideals so enlarged that the rocking-horse is no longer a prize. So Abraham left Ur expecting to get Canaan, but the longer he resided within its borders the more he thought of a better country, having seen the promises "and greeted them from afar" (Heb. 11:13). Herein lies Abraham's greatness. "Faith was new in his time" (Davidson).

## STUDY III.

### Jacob, "The Hebrew Ulysses" (Gen. 25—35).

*1st Day: Jacob's Parents and Birth.*

Read Gen. 25:19—26:35.

1. We omit Isaac from the list of Israel's "Leaders" because his life was comparatively uneventful. He was quiet and inoffensive, retiring and meditative. Isaac has been called "the Wordsworth of the Old Testament." In disposition he lacked energy. He glorified the past. He dwelt in the neighborhood of Beersheba, and was content to dig out the wells which Abraham had digged before him. "He was not a great nomadic chief or warrior like his father" (Ottley). Matheson speaks of him as "distinctly a female type"; and it is indeed obvious that during the last forty years of his life, when he was blind, he was a mere tool in the hands of others.

2. His willingness as a youth to be sacrificed on Mount Moriah, however, was itself sufficient to make him a worthy successor of Abraham and the Christian type of meekness. Compared with this, all the other deeds of his active life seem to have had no interest to his contemporaries or successors. "There was but this one thing to say of him. No more seemed needful" (Dods).

3. Isaac married at the age of forty. The story of how he won Rebekah is one of the most beautifully picturesque idylls recorded in the whole Old Testament, and wonderfully true to Oriental life (Gen. 24). Rebekah's eager, active spirit was exactly suited to Isaac's retiring and contemplative disposition. She possessed the stronger nature, and she also showed superior cleverness as a

schemer. Her twin sons inherited her chief characteristics: Esau, her open-handedness; Jacob, her craft.

4. When famine arose, Isaac and Rebekah repaired to Gerar, intending probably to go down, like Abraham, into Egypt; but Jehovah forbade them (26:2). Strange, indeed, that Isaac, also, should have denied to Abimelech that he was married! But perhaps if we knew more of Oriental customs and the rights of kings, and how a man stood in jeopardy of his life if married to an attractive woman, the repetition would not seem so unnatural. Yet it is possible, of course, that the traditions have been inaccurately transmitted.

Why did God command Isaac not to go down into Egypt?

*2d Day: Jacob, "the Aspiring."*

Read Gen. 27.

1. The brief biography of Jacob is an epitome of the history of the whole Jewish race. "No other Old Testament saint saw more of the favor and forgiveness of God." Even before his birth he showed an overreaching disposition by catching the heel of his brother, as if already striving to hold him back from his rightful priority.

2. Jacob from his youth coveted the birthright inheritance, because it carried with it certain priestly prerogatives in the household. He may have frequently but unsuccessfully bartered for it. He probably studied his brother's weakness. One night Esau came home from the chase, hungry and faint, with a ravenous appetite which must be gratified at once. Jacob was boiling pottage. Esau begged for some, and was willing to pay the price. Jacob seized his opportunity, and gave him a mess in exchange for his birthright, sealing the bargain with an oath.

3. One's sympathies naturally go out to Esau. But the contrast between him and his brother was one of char-

acter. Esau was a "profane" man; that is, he was secular; Jacob aspired to a standing with God. Esau was a man of the present; Jacob, a man of the future. Esau was a type of the natural man; Jacob, of the spiritual. Esau was a man of strong animal instincts, and enjoyed the pleasures of sense; Jacob, with all his faults, was susceptible to moral growth, and possessed God-given "capacity for religion."

4. Isaac loved Esau; Rebekah, Jacob. Mischief always follows parental partiality. When Isaac was one hundred and thirty-seven years old (which was forty-three years before his death) he became blind, and fancied he was going to die. He therefore called Esau, and sent him to fetch venison, that he might eat, and bestow upon him his birthright blessing. "It was his hastening to bless Esau," says Dods, "which drove Rebekah to checkmate him by winning the blessing for her favorite."

5. Jacob readily responded to his mother's subtle scheme and was equal to every emergency in the carrying out of the deception. Says Luther, in commenting upon the incident: "Had it been me, I'd have dropped the dish."

6. The blessing pronounced upon Jacob (vs. 27-29) and that upon Esau (vs. 39, 40) are apparently similar; but probably the ambiguous Hebrew preposition "from" in v. 39 should be rendered "away from," as in the margin of the Revised Versions.

Does the Bible warrant our supposing that Esau's descendants ever had any religion?

*3d Day: Jacob at Bethel.*

Read Gen. 28.

1. When Rebekah's plot was discovered, "Jacob had to flee for his life, and, for all we know, Rebekah never saw him more" (Dods). He sought refuge in Haran. Arriving at Bethel, after a long day's journey, he lay down

upon the ground, "a weary, troubled and sinful fugitive." It was, perhaps, his first night away from home. He was setting out in life—alone!

2. His dream was no accident. It was "the result of his whole past life" (Matheson). The great, gigantic stairway which he saw, and which was probably suggested by the terraces of limestone slabs over which he had climbed on his way up from Beersheba, formed a link between him and heaven. And the angels ascending and descending upon it were calculated to teach him that all heaven was at his disposal, and that he was not "alone," after all.

3. When he awakened, the ladder was gone, but the revelation was permanent. He was amazed, and said: "Surely Jehovah is in this place (too), and I knew it not." Jacob supposed that he had left God behind at Beersheba. And he was afraid, and said: "This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

4. The vision changed Jacob. He came to self-consciousness. It brought him to realize that he was no longer a mere fugitive in search of employment, but a partner with God. This afforded him both comfort and encouragement, just when he most needed it. He now realized the meaning of his birthright.

5. Rising early in the morning, he converted his pillow into a pillar, and, in order to dedicate it, poured upon it some of the precious oil which his mother had given him for the journey. Then he made a vow, promising that if Jehovah would give him just enough to eat and wear, and bring him home again, that this pillar would be God's house, and that he would thereafter obligate himself ever to render some service to God in return for his kindly providence. This was no mere commercial "bargain" on Jacob's part, but the first step in his spiritual education. "If we could always live at a high level, there would be no need for vows" (Strachan).

What use does St. John make of this incident? See John 1:51.

### *4th Day: Jacob at Mahanaim.*

Glance over Gen. 29:1—32:2.

1. After the vision at Bethel, Jacob "lifted up his feet" and went joyfully on his way to Haran. His uncle Laban was a match for him. For twenty years, diamond cut diamond. Seven years Jacob served Laban for Rachel, to recompense him for the loss of his daughter's services, and at the end of the period he was given Leah. Jacob had deceived his father, and now he was deceived himself. He served other seven years for Rachel, and obtained her; but it was Leah, after all, more than Rachel, who built up the house of Israel.

2. Jacob further served Laban six years for the speckled of his flock, and prospered to such a degree that his uncle became envious. Jacob was divinely warned to return to Canaan with his wives and twelve children. He left while Laban was busy shearing his sheep. Laban, however, overtook him in Mount Gilead. Rachel had stolen her father's *teraphim,* or household gods, in order to insure good fortune to her home. In attempting to recover these, Laban found himself outwitted by his own daughter. Jacob seized the opportunity of reminding Laban of his twenty years' ungrudging service and of his uncle's arbitrary changing of his wages; whereupon Laban proposed a treaty of friendship, and they set up a stone at Mizpah, saying: "This pillar be witness that I will not pass over it to harm thee, nor thou to harm me."

3. The "long game of well-matched wits" being ended, Laban returns home, while Jacob goes on his way to Canaan. In his journey, the angels of God meet him, "as if to welcome and congratulate him on his auspicious return" (Driver). The vision was timely, for Jacob faced another of life's crises, and he was afraid. What if, in

skirting the borders of Edom, he should meet his brother Esau?

4. Suddenly, "a bright-harnessed army of angels appears to him, and, in a glow of confident joy, he calls the name of the place Mahanaim—two camps" (Maclaren). One camp was his own defenseless company of women and children; the other, the Divine presence, which formed a bodyguard about him. So God promises to help all his timid children. In a postscript to the last letter which General Gordon sent home from Khartoum were the words: "The hosts are with me—Mahanaim."

From Gen. 31:53 what may we infer was Jacob's conception of God?

*5th Day: Jacob at Peniel.*

Read Gen. 32.

1. Jacob's life in Haran was one of worldliness and greed. He was busy, clever, competitive and successful; but morally he became cold and lethargic. He went out with his staff in his hand, and came back rich, increased to "two bands."

2. At the fords of the rushing, "struggling" Jabbok, God threw him into a panic: Esau was coming with four hundred men. "It was the eve of the greatest crisis of his life. His future welfare hung in the balance" (Driver). Fearing seizure by Esau, he felt himself seized by an unknown antagonist. It was a conflict between nature and grace. At first it was a struggle for existence; before the end, Jacob prayed for a blessing.

3. Jacob was hard to subdue. He was returning in his own strength, and had to be taught that his inheritance of Canaan was the gift of God, and not the result of his own prowess. "There was too much of selfhood in Jacob" (Meyer). God finally had to beat him to make him give up wrestling with Him; and even then he would not wholly let Him go. But before God would bless him He

compelled him to confess that his name was still "Jacob." This made Jacob conscious of his standing before God.

4. Having admitted that he was a sinful "Supplanter," God gave him a new name, "Israel," which signified that he was a "Perseverer with God" and a "Soldier of God." The name was proof that a moral change had taken place in him. The title was the prize of victory. Jacob had prevailed, but he had won his victory through the defeat of his own will. His antagonist now became his friend.

5. Jacob went halting thereafter; but it was better for him to go humbly limping through life than to stalk about with an unconquered self-confidence, antagonistic to God. "The I-life must be crucified before the Christ-life can take its place" (Meyer).

Contrast the Jacob at Bethel and the Jacob at Peniel. See Hos. 12:4.

*6th Day: Jacob at Bethel Again.*

Read Gen. 33—35.

1. The much-dreaded meeting with Esau passed happily. Jacob "prevailed" upon him to accept of his presents, because he had already "prevailed" with God. So Esau returns to Edom; Jacob journeys slowly across the Jordan to Shechem. There he purchases a piece of ground on which to pitch his tent and erect an altar. Joshua 24:32 tells who later was buried there.

2. Upon this follows the narrative of Simeon and Levi's dealings with Shechem, who had seduced their sister Dinah. Jacob censures his sons severely for having made him unpopular among the native Canaanites. They reply that honor is everything. Nevertheless, they had acted like religious fanatics, and had seriously endangered their own and their father's safety.

3. But why did Jacob tarry at Shechem? After all that he had experienced during the twenty previous years, we should not have expected him to halt in his journey until

he had at least reached Bethel. But he was probably captivated by the pastures about Shechem, and had possibly forgotten his vow. "We are apt to forget our vows when God has fulfilled His side of them. Resolutions made in trouble are soon forgotten" (Maclaren). Besides, going to Bethel involved not only poorer pasturage, but also domestic reform in matters of religion. There were "foreign gods" which had divided the worship of his family, and which must be left behind.

4. Accordingly, God had to warn him, saying: "Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there" (35:1). Perhaps his fear of the Shechemites also influenced him. Indeed, it is a wonder that they did not pursue him. Jacob arose and went; and again he received a renewal of the Divine promises.

5. By his return to Bethel the history of his active life is complete. The rest of his days are passed in quietude. In fact, the remaining notices of his life are of a sorrowful kind.

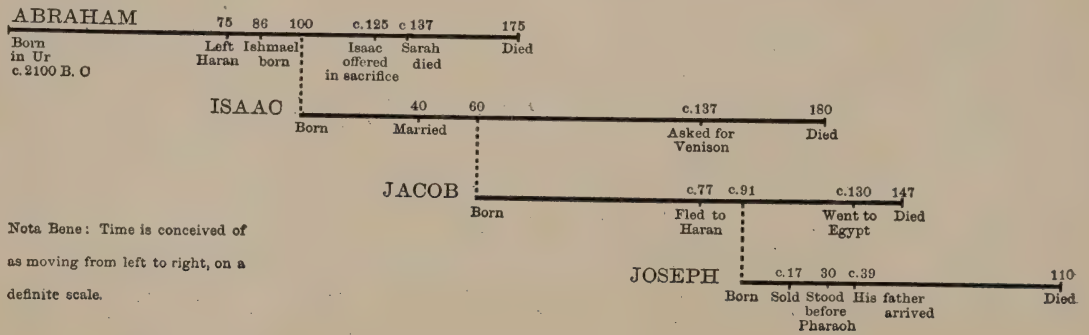
What effect have broken vows upon the will?
How does God regard them? (Eccl. 5:4).

*7th Day: Jacob's Old Age—Review.*

Glance over Gen. 25—35.

1. Domestic trials overtook Jacob in his old age; bereavement succeeding bereavement. First, Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, the confidante and counselor of the family, died, and the whole family wept (35:8). Then Rachel, the object of his dearest love, was taken (vs. 16 ff.). Then "Reuben went and lay with Bilhah, his father's concubine, and Israel heard of it" (v. 22). Then Isaac died, and for the last time Jacob and Esau are brought together, at the burial (v. 29). Then Joseph, the pride of his heart, was snatched away, and the old man was overwhelmed with grief (37:34 f.). Finally, famine forced

# CHRONOLOGY OF THE PATRIARCHS



the aged patriarch again to expatriate himself in order to preserve his life (46:3).

2. We shall hear more of Jacob as we trace the public career of Joseph, for his life and that of his son are closely intertwined. But enough has been told to show that he was a miracle of grace. He was coarse, selfish and passionate, having business capacity, but also possessed of a religious nature which was capable of great development. He coveted the best gifts. He had fixed religious principles. He was steady in his habits. The struggle that went on within him was a long and fierce one; but grace conquered, and Jacob, "the Overreacher," became Israel, "the Prince with God."

3. Esau, on the contrary, married Hittite, Ishmaelite and Canaanite wives and settled among the mountain fastnesses of Mount Seir. He was wholly governed by animal impulses. He loved to hunt. He lived selfishly by himself; and nowhere in the Old Testament is there any mention of the religion of his descendants. According to Josephus, the Edomites were "a turbulent and unruly race, always hovering on the verge of revolution, always rejoicing in changes, easily roused to arms, and rushing into battle as if going to a feast."

4. The moral of Esau's life is plainly this, namely, that "the finest disposition, if unsupported by steady habits and fixed religious principles, is no safeguard against degeneracy." To Jacob, on the contrary, religion came to mean everything. After years of wandering, his seed inherited Canaan. With Stanley, we may call him "the Hebrew Ulysses."

Look up the references to Jacob in subsequent books of the Old Testament, particularly Deut. 26:5, Hos. 12:3-5, 12, and Isa. 43:27.

## STUDY IV.

### Joseph, the Viceroy of Egypt (Gen. 37—50).

*1st Day: Joseph's Boyhood and Dreams.*

Read Gen. 37.

1. The history of Joseph is charming to both old and young. He is first introduced to us as a lad seventeen years old, visiting his brethren, who were shepherds. Even at that early age he seems to have been deputed by his father to oversee and report on the conduct of his unscrupulous brothers. But he was in no sense a gratuitous and censorious tale-bearer; rather, he found it impossible to be "partaker of other men's sins."

2. Jacob loved him specially of all his sons, having made for him a long, ornamented garment with sleeves, which provoked his brothers to envy. When the Athenians wearied of hearing Aristides called "The Just," they banished him. About that time, also, Joseph had dreams of his own greatness; and he was vain or tactless enough to tell them to his brethren, and consequently they hated him the more. "Hatred and envy make a perilous mixture" (Maclaren). He was not, however, ambitious. "Possibly he thought very little of his dreams till he saw how much importance his brothers attached to them." Dreams are often prophecies.

3. His brothers at Dothan, conscious of his superiority, rather than harboring resentment because he had reported their barbarous deeds to his father, when they behold him approaching, plot against his life to see "what will become of his dreams." Seizing him, they cast him into one of the many bottle-shaped, rock-hewn cisterns with which

Palestine still abounds; and then, hard-heartedly closing their ears to his anguish (42:21), they "sit down to eat bread." The wonder is it did not choke them!

4. Rising from their meal, at Judah's suggestion they decide to sell their brother to certain Ishmaelite caravans from Midian on their way to Egypt, and so they do. There is no real inconsistency in verse 28, for the Ishmaelites were Midianites. Look up Judg. 8:24, and read the context. To complete their cruel deed, they dipped his coat in blood and carried it to their father, inquiring if it might be his son's. Had they wished, *they* might have informed *him*.

Give at least three causes for the jealousy of Joseph's brethren toward him. What remedy for strife does St. Paul commend in Phil. 2:3?

*2d Day: Joseph Tempted and Imprisoned.*

Read Gen. 39.

1. Arriving in Egypt, the Midianites sold Joseph to Potiphar, the chief of the police—an officer of great responsibility. Potiphar is called "an Egyptian" (v. 1), probably to distinguish him from the Shepherd, or Hyksos kings who ruled over the land of Egypt at that time.

2. Joseph began his Egyptian career as a serf. But Jehovah was with him in his slavery. With resignation he accepted his humiliating position, and resolved to adjust himself to his new environment. "Acquiescence in an affliction is the first step in the way out of it" (Taylor). Potiphar soon found that he had a treasure in his Hebrew slave.

3. Joseph seems to have served fully ten years as bondsman in the house of Potiphar, when a terrible trial crossed his life. It was a most subtle temptation; first, because it appealed to his natural appetite; second, because it came to him in a foreign land, when he was away from

the restraints of home; and third, because it might possibly lead to his own elevation in his master's place. But "Joseph's piety was not a matter of longitude and latitude." He was too honorable to plot treachery against his master, and his character was already too mature to yield to fleshly desire, even though absent from home.

4. Accordingly, when his mistress persisted in her temptation, he met her with a decided and unequivocal "no," putting the matter on the highest possible grounds by saying: "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (v. 9). This is one of the great texts of the book of Genesis. We commit *crimes* against our fellows; against God we *sin*.

5. Joseph fled, leaving his garment in her hand. He did not wait to parley. To debate with evil means defeat. Say, rather, when assailed, "There won't be any temptation," and you have won a temporary victory, at least. Besides losing his coat, Joseph was sentenced to the "dungeon," or royal "round-house" (41:14). But it is better to forfeit liberty than the approbation of God; or, as Matthew Henry quaintly puts it, "It is better to lose a good coat than a good conscience."

Compare Joseph's conception of sin as against God with that of David in Ps. 51:4.

St. Augustine sums up the history of a temptation in four words: *cogitatio, imaginatio, delectatio, assensio*—a thought, a picture, a fascination, a fall.

### 3*d Day: Joseph Promoted.*

Glance over Gen. 40, 41.

1. The thirteen years of Joseph's life between the ages of seventeen and thirty were years of slavery and imprisonment. But Jehovah was with him even in prison, and he was promoted to a wardenship. "Our religion should recommend us, and therefore itself, to those who have to do with us" (Maclaren).

2. Though plunged from serfdom into prison, Joseph never lost his faith in God. "The deepest humiliation is often the path to the highest exaltation" (Dods). Patience has its sure reward. By waiting, his character was "steadied into strength and ripened into maturity." The palm-tree, it is said, grows stronger under weights. Neither did Joseph lose his happiness of disposition. Indeed, Matheson calls him "the Optimist," and defines optimism as "not the belief that all *will* come right, but the belief that all is right *now*, and that nothing has ever been wrong."

3. At length, through having interpreted correctly his fellow-prisoners' dreams, he became the interpreter of Pharaoh's. Dods thinks that "Joseph's willingness to interpret the dreams of others proves that he still believed in his own." Be that as it may, Pharaoh recognized the superior wisdom of the young Hebrew prisoner, and, because "the spirit of God was with him," promoted him to the rank of Grand Vizier, or Viceroy, which was the second position in the realm. "Piety is no hindrance to the right sort of success" (Taylor).

4. Such a promotion would have been quite impossible, had not the Pharaoh been a Hyksos, or Semitic king, who probably had little prejudice against a Hebrew officer of state. Joseph's naturalization as an Egyptian followed; he was invested with the royal insignia, made to ride in the second chariot, and was given an Egyptian name, which signified in a general way that he was the "Support of Life," and he also married into the priestly caste.

5. His new office involved great responsibilities. Dignity meant work. He spent no time in thinking of his honors. For seven years he collected food in every city. Then the seven years of famine came. In every particular he, who was before a prisoner, proved himself a wise statesman. "Endure the prison a little longer. The chariot and the throne will be here ere long" (Taylor).

What two difficulties exist in Gen. 40:15? Compare 37:28.

In what sense was Canaan "the land of the Hebrews"?

*4th Day: Joseph and His Brethren.*

Scan Gen. 42—45.

1. The famine extended to Hebron, and Jacob had to send to Egypt for bread. Benjamin, however, he kept at home. When the other ten sons arrived at Pharaoh's court, Joseph knew them, but they did not recognize him. The conversation was carried on through an interpreter (42:23). He first made them relate their family history, and then sternly shut them up, alleging that they had come on a hostile mission. They had put him in a pit, and now he put them in a prison. But after three days he relented, letting all go except Simeon, whom he kept as a hostage until Benjamin should be brought.

2. Returning home, they related to Jacob their perplexing experiences; and the old man was bowed with grief, as he had been twenty-two years before, over the loss of Joseph. He resolved that under no circumstances should Benjamin be allowed to go out of his sight. But the famine pressed sore, and a second expedition became imperative. Judah stood sponsor for Benjamin's safe return, and they set out.

3. Arriving in Egypt, Simeon is released; they present their gifts to Joseph and bow themselves down before him to the earth. A feast is prepared for them in the palace, the meaning of which perplexes them greatly. Joseph's arrangement of them at the table according to age arouses their suspicion still more. After dinner, however, their sacks are filled and they safely take their departure. But they are scarcely outside the city when Joseph's steward overtakes them and accuses them of stealing his lord's cup. Search is made, and it is found

in Benjamin's sack. Plunged by the discovery into a panic of dismay, they return to the palace.

4. Judah's touching intercession in behalf of Benjamin follows (44:18-34), which for tenderness and pathos is unsurpassed in all literature. Moved by his impassioned appeal, and choking with emotion, Joseph quickly orders the audience chamber to be cleared. Judah's plea had found a powerful ally in Joseph's love. All the attendants gone, he weeps at the discovery of his brothers' penitence. He utters the two simple words, "I (am) Joseph," and invites them to come near to him. He could safely trust them now, for they had demonstrated their change of temper, and in particular their unwillingness to inflict a new sorrow upon their aged father. At the same time, Joseph manifested a lofty type of the Christian grace of forgiveness.

5. With what joy did they find that the ruler of Egypt was their brother! They had sold him into slavery, but God had set him upon a throne. "Man proposes, but God disposes." Unintentionally, they had been his benefactors. "If we would only cultivate the habit of seeing God behind second causes, our hearts would be kept from much wrath and bitterness" (Maclaren).

Ought not Joseph to have made himself known to his father immediately upon his promotion, instead of delaying seven years?

*5th Day: Joseph and His Father.*

Glance over Gen. 46:1—50:14.

1. Joseph displayed a most tender regard for his father. His repeated inquiries after his father's condition (43:27, 45:3), his wish that his brethren should hasten to tell Jacob that he was still alive (45:9), and the sumptuous provisions which he sent for his father's comfort "by the way" (45:23), all witness to his filial affection and to the

"impatient love of a long-absent son." Though monarch of all Egypt, he laid his dignity at his father's feet. "No elevation will ever make a son forget his reverence for his father" (Maclaren).

2. When finally his brethren set out for home, Joseph's parting word of counsel, "See that ye fall not out by the way" (45:24), was a wise and timely caution; for, to have accused each other of their former cruelty toward their brother would have been most unfortunate, though it would have been perfectly natural to do so.

3. When they reached Hebron and reported to their father the glad news concerning Joseph, the old man was naturally, at first, incredulous. Persuaded, however, by the regal provisions which Joseph had sent for his personal comfort, that his sons were this time telling the truth, he was completely overcome with joy, and he consented to undertake the journey; though it must have cost him much to leave the Land of Promise, even for a brief sojourn.

4. Pausing at his old home in Beersheba, he there offered sacrifices, and in return received Divine sanction for the journey in the words: "Fear not to go down into Egypt." In our making new decisons or life-plans, let us remember Jacob's sacrifice at Beersheba. A few days later it was announced in Egypt that Israel was approaching. Joseph made no delay in coming out to meet him, and a joyful reunion took place. This was followed by Joseph's presentation of his father to Pharaoh, which was a most memorable interview. It began and ended with a benediction. Jacob's "seventy souls" are assigned a settlement in Goshen apart from the other inhabitants of the Delta, because "every shepherd is an abomination unto the (native) Egyptians"—not necessarily, however, an abomination to the Hyksos King.

5. For seventeen years Jacob lived in Egypt in the happy fellowship of his beloved son. During those years three noteworthy incidents occurred: (1) An interview with

Joseph, in which he made Joseph promise to bury him in Canaan—his covenant possession (look up 47:29); (2) his blessing upon Joseph's sons (note 48:16); and (3) his dying prophecies concerning his own family (read 49:1-27). After which he died. "Thus a career that began in deceit was closed in excellence" (Taylor).

Which is the fifth commandment? Look up Exod. 20:12. What is said of Jesus' filial regard for His parents in Luke 2:51?

*6th Day: Joseph's Death.*

Read Gen. 50:15-26.

1. After the burial of Jacob, Joseph's brethren feared lest he should recompense them for their evil doings. Joseph, however, showed them that he had lost all bitterness, and that he had forgiven them freely, fully and permanently. "To return good for evil is Godlike; good for good, manlike; evil for evil, beastlike; evil for good, devillike." "One of the hardest things for the sinner is to accept forgiveness." "Human magnanimity will always be suspected by those who have not yet appreciated the divine" (Taylor). No wonder that Joseph wept when they betrayed their distrust of him. But Joseph met their suspicion with characteristic generosity, and assured them that "God meant it for good." One of the secrets of Joseph's greatness was his strong belief in God's providence. "To live high above low hatreds and revenges, let us cultivate the habit of looking behind men to God" (Maclaren).

2. After these things, Joseph lived with his brethren in Egypt fifty-four years, and altogether after his promotion eighty years. Of what trifling moment now must have seemed the thirteen years of slavery and imprisonment at the first! During all these years he probably saw more than one Pharaoh upon the throne of Egypt, but at no time did he allow himself to be weaned from the promised

possessions of Canaan. His dying bequest was: "God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence." Herein was a double legacy: (1) His faith in God, and (2) his unburied coffin, which would ever remind them that Egypt was not their rightful inheritance. It was the grewsome custom at feasts in Egypt, it is said, to bring a mummy to the table, that the guests might be reminded of their mortality. Joseph's "noble revenge" was that his brethren should restore him to the land whence he had been expelled. "His faith had almost the strength of sight" (Taylor). Between his death and burial hundreds of years intervened. Look up Exod. 13:19, and Josh. 24:32.

3. Thus Joseph, the Viceroy of Egypt, and the saviour of his father's family, died, and his body was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt. "With Canaan written on his heart, and Egypt administered by his hands, he is a type of what every Christian ought to be" (Maclaren).

In how many different respects is Joseph a type of Christ?

*7th Day: Review of the Patriarchal Age.*

Reread hastily Gen. 12—50.

1. Archæology in recent years has thrown much additional light upon the Patriarchal age. It has also done something toward establishing the truthfulness of the biblical accounts. Thus three at least of the four kings of Mesopotamia mentioned in Gen. 14 are now known to have been contemporaries and to have ruled over the "West Land," or Canaan. Hence, such an invasion as that therein described is at least a possibility.

2. Again, the history of Joseph is richly colored with Egyptian descriptions and allusions. For example, his appointment as overseer of Potiphar's house and the great temptation which befell him at the hands of his master's wife find a striking parallel in the Egyptian romance known as "The Tale of the Two Brothers"; while the allu-

sions to the butler and baker, to Pharaoh's dreams, and to the granaries and famine, are wonderfully true to Egyptian conditions and circumstances. Especially interesting is an inscription known as "The Seven Years' Famine Inscription," discovered by an American on the Island of Sehel, near the First Cataract of the Nile, which tells of a famine in primeval times which continued seven successive years, caused by the failure of the Nile to rise. This inscription, though not purporting to describe the famine of Joseph's time, nevertheless *illustrates* at least the possibility of the truthfulness of the Genesis story. In like manner, the monuments corroborate, directly or indirectly, the historicity of many other statements of the early patriarchal history.

3. But there is another question that must be raised before we take our leave of the patriarchs. Are they individuals or *tribes?* May not their movements represent the successive migrations of Eastern clans from their original home in Mesopotamia? And would not popular oral tradition very naturally take on some of the opinions entertained by those who later passed it on from age to age? To all such inquiries, with Canon Driver, it may be cautiously replied that "Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are, in outline, historically true, but that their characters are idealized and their biographies in many respects colored by the feelings and associations of a later age."

4. As to the religion of the patriarchs, it is unquestionably true that it was purer and more elevated than that which prevailed elsewhere in their age (see Josh. 24:14), and that "the ultimate greatness of Israel existed potentially from the first" (Wade). The later prophets must have had their antecedents.

Note especially the four Messianic passages in the book of Genesis, viz., 3:15, 9:27, 12:2, and 49:10. But, after all, how much did the patriarchs know of a coming Messiah? Look up John 8:56.

## STUDY V.

### Moses, the Emancipator of Israel (Exod. 1—18).

*1st Day: Moses' Birth and Childhood.*

Read Exod. 1:1—2:10.

1. "Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph." Very probably two hundred years or more are passed over in this single sentence, during which the Hyksos, or Shepherd kings, had been driven out by Aahmes, the first Pharaoh of the XVIIIth dynasty, and the "seventy souls" of Jacob's family had become a multitude which were liable, in case of war, to prove an element of danger to Egypt. Compare Gen. 46:27, and Exod. 1:5-7.

2. So mightily, indeed, had the Hebrews increased that the king felt constrained to afflict them by forcing them to build two magazine cities, Pithom and Raamses, as storehouses for grain. Yet the more he afflicted them the more they multiplied. Accordingly, he resorted to more brutal measures and ordered that all male children should be killed; and when this edict was evaded, in a spasm of cruelty he ordered that every new-born Hebrew should be cast into the Nile.

3. At this juncture, and under these circumstances, Moses was born. But his parents were Levites, who feared God more than they feared the edict of Pharaoh; for, although Israel's sojourn in Egypt had produced very deleterious results on the people as a whole, Moses' father and mother seem to have remained steadfast believers in the God of their fathers. Look up Josh. 24:14, Hebs. 11:23, and Ezek. 20:7, 8.

4. Moses was exposed, but not abandoned. "His sister

stood afar off, to know what would be done to him," and the ark of papyrus bearing its precious cargo was so hidden as to be conveniently found by the king's daughter, who, according to Josephus, was married, but had no children, and whose name was Thermuthis. Sargon I, King of Agade, is said to have been similarly exposed and rescued. With what a touch of exquisite art the historian describes his sister's diplomacy in suggesting a possible nurse for the child! And with what joy must his mother have clasped her own babe to her bosom and begun the responsible work of nursing him—for "wages"!

What were the names of Moses' parents? See Exod. 6:20.

*2d Day: Moses' Education and Choice.*

Read Exod. 2:11-25.

1. Stephen says that "Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." See Acts 7:22. This is probable, for Pharaoh's edict had introduced the future deliverer of the Hebrews into the royal palace, where he could receive the best possible training for his after-work. "Thus does cruelty outwit itself." He probably attended the University at Heliopolis (six miles northeast of modern Cairo), which has been fittingly called "the Oxford of Ancient Egypt."

2. Among the many departments of knowledge which would there be open to him would be reading and writing the hieroglyphics, the decimal and duodecimal scales in arithmetic, geometry and trigonometry (think of the mathematical exactness of the Pyramids); astronomy, painting, architecture, including the use of the wedge, lever and inclined plane; dentistry also (the teeth of certain mummies have been found to be filled with gold); anatomy, chemistry, and a knowledge of metals, copper, iron and bronze; likewise music, and the other rites and accompaniments of the Egyptian religion.

3. Outwardly, therefore, we may safely suppose, he be-

came an Egyptian. This is confirmed by the tradition, preserved by Josephus, which says that he was appointed general of the Egyptian army and warred successfully with the Ethiopians, and as a reward for his brilliant achievements on the battlefield received Tharbis, the king's daughter, as a wife.

4. But in process of time he seems to have wearied of court life, for twice, at least, he went out from Tanis, the capital, to visit his brethren and look upon their afflictions. He heard their sighs and groans. His heart yearned to lift their burdens and set them free. He resolved to do so. He made a choice. He killed an Egyptian taskmaster, which was a sign that he was willing to deliver them.

5. But the Israelites were unprepared for insurrection. The hour had not struck. God was not yet ready. Moses, too, was ill-prepared for so great an undertaking. His patriotism was praiseworthy, but his act was rash and premature. "He had not yet learned to distinguish between passion and principle" (Meyer).

Look up what Heb. 11:25 says of Moses' choice; compare Solomon's in 1 Kings 3:11, 12, and Christ's in Matt. 4:9, 10.

*3d Day: His Vision and Call.*

Read Exod. 3 and 4.

1. Compelled to flee in consequence of his murder of the Egyptian taskmaster, he escaped to Midian, beyond the reach of Pharaoh's officers. At this time he was not far from forty years of age. See Acts 7:23. Though learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, his education was still very incomplete. Forty years more would be required to free him of his self-will and self-reliance.

2. He became a shepherd. He married. He tended the flocks of Jethro, his father-in-law. Two sons were born to him. For forty years he dwelt in desert solitude. But one day, having led his flock to the back of the wilderness,

he received a vision. He saw a bush which burned with out being consumed.

3. He turned aside to behold it. He heard a voice--a voice which commanded him to return to Egypt and free the people from their yoke. With characteristic modesty he declined. Here are his excuses: (1) "Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh?" To which God replied: "Certainly I will be with thee." Look up Exod. 3:11, 12. (2) "Who shall I say sent me?" And God said, "I am that I am"; *i.e.,* They will have to take Me on faith, as Abraham did. The future will demonstrate that I am the true God and that you have a Divine commission. See 3:13, 14. (3) "But, behold, they will not believe me." And Jehovah said, "What is that in thy hand?" See 4:1, 2. (4) "O Lord, I am not eloquent." During his forty years of shepherd life he most likely had become rusty in the Egyptian language. And God said, "Who hath made man's mouth?" Look up 4:10, 11. (5) "O Lord, send some one else." And Jehovah was angry, and said, "Aaron will interpret for you." See 4:13, 14. So Moses went, and his brother joined him.

What excuses, perchance, are you making to the call of God's Spirit?

*4th Day: Moses' Struggle with Pharaoh.*

Read rapidly Exod. 5:1—12:36.

1. The vision of the burning bush was the turning point in Moses' career. Previous to it he had been a prince, a patriot and a shepherd, little more; subsequent to it he suddenly developed into a deliverer, a general, a legislator and a prophet.

2. Returning to Egypt, he stood before Pharaoh and demanded the emancipation of the Hebrews. It was a strange declaration that he made to Pharaoh, "Let us go *three days' journey* into the wilderness"; but it must be remembered that, ethically, in the East it is considered

quite unnecessary for one to tell the whole truth in his intercourse with another of different nationality. The two understood each other perfectly: Moses was acting as a diplomat. Study Exod. 5:3 in the light of 3:12.

3. At the outset Pharaoh met Moses' demand with disdainful defiance. "Who is Jehovah?" he replied, and then increased the people's burdens. For this they blamed Moses, and he became discouraged. But God reassured him that He was "Jehovah." Note how many times in Exod. 6 the assertion is made, "I am Jehovah."

4. From Exod. 6:3, it is sometimes inferred that the name Jehovah was now announced to Moses for the first time. But as a name it was probably known long before to the patriarchs, and, according to Delitzsch, the Assyriologist, it was not unfamiliar to the Babylonians of Hammurabi's time. It is also embedded, only in a shorter form, in the name of Moses' mother, "Jochebed," which signifies "Jehovah is glory." The passage, therefore, conveys not so much the announcement of a new name as it emphasizes its new significance, that Jehovah is a self-existent, covenant-keeping Redeemer or Saviour-God.

5. In the struggle which ensued it should be observed that the contest between Moses and Pharaoh was not one merely for material independence or for social and civil emancipation, but in the strictest sense religious, *in order that the Egyptians might know that Jehovah was the Sovereign-God.* Moses stood before Pharaoh as the "legate of Truth" (Taylor).

Note in the following table the progressive and climacteric effect of the plagues (page 48).

*5th Day: Israel's National Birthday.*

Read Exod. 12:37—15:21.

1. The long contest with Pharaoh, which must have occupied several months, was brought to a climax on Pass-

| THE TEN PLAGUES | EFFECT ON THE MAGICIANS | THE HEBREWS EXEMPT | EFFECT ON PHARAOH |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 BLOOD | Did so "in like manner" | —— | "Did not lay it to heart" |
| 2 FROGS | Did so "in like manner" | —— | "Entreat Jehovah" to "take away the frogs from me" |
| 3 LICE | "This is the Finger of God" | —— | "Hearkened not unto them" |
| 4 FLIES | (Silent) | "No swarms of flies" in Goshen | Go sacrifice "in the land" --- "not very far away" |
| 5 MURRAIN | (Silent) | Of Israel's Cattle "there died not one" | His heart was "stubborn" |
| 6 BOILS | "Could not stand because of the boils" | —— | "Jehovah hardened" his heart |
| 7 HAIL | —— | "Only in Goshen there was no hail" | "I have sinned this time" |
| 8 LOCUSTS | —— | —— | "Go now, ye that are men" |
| 9 DARKNESS | —— | "Israel had light in their dwellings" | "Only let your flocks and herds be stayed" |
| 10 FIRST-BORN | —— | "Passed over" | "Take both your flocks and your herds and be gone and bless me also" |

over night, when the destroying angel slew all the first-born of the Egyptians, but passed over the homes of the Israelites upon whose door-posts the blood of the sacrificial lamb had been sprinkled.

2. So extraordinary was this event that the Israelites were commanded to keep it as a memorial. It was the birth-night of their national independence. "History was born on the night when the children of Israel went forth out of Egypt" (Bunsen). The Passover had a typical significance, also. Look up 1 Cor. 5:7, 8. "All history is prophecy" (Bacon).

3. The event culminated in the crossing of the Red Sea. The exact spot is unknown, but it was probably not far from Lake Timsah, or Crocodile Lake, for there is good reason for supposing that the Red Sea at that time extended farther to the north than now. The route thither is not easy to trace. One thing is noticeable, that the Divine Leader caused them to abandon the direct route "by the way of the land of the Philistines" and completely hemmed them in between the sea and the bodyguard of Pharaoh, which pressed from behind.

4. As a result, the people became sore afraid and murmured. But Moses, like a general and a hero, replied: "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah." When the path of duty is not clear, it is well for us, also, to "stand still"; for, "when God leads us into danger, He will take us safely through it" (Taylor).

5. Immediately Jehovah commanded that they "go forward." They did so. Not one of the Israelites perished; on the contrary, not one of the Egyptians was saved. Their national birthday had arrived, their emancipation was now complete, and it was appropriately celebrated with a psalm which is one of the grandest anthems in the literature of antiquity. Read Exod. 15:1-18.

What did Moses take with him? Look up Exod. 13:19.

*6th Day: The Journey to Sinai.*

Read Exod. 15:22—18:27.

1. After crossing the Red Sea the Israelites entered the wilderness of Shur, or "the wall." In Num. 38:8, it is called Etham, which probably means the same thing. There still exist remains of an ancient wall which extended at one time across the Isthmus of Suez and served as a protection to Egypt on the Asiatic side. Num. 33 furnishes a condensed diary of Israel's itinerary.

2. After "three days" they came to an oasis, which they named Marah because the water was brackish. It is best identified with *Aiyun Musa,* or "the wells of Moses," which is distant about two hours southeast of Suez.

3. From Marah they journeyed on to Elim, which is frequently identified with *Wady-Gharundel,* where they found twelve springs and seventy palm-trees. To-day the palms there are of a dwarfed variety. Going on, thirty days from the time of departure brought them into the wilderness of Sin. Compare Exod. 16:1 with 12:6. Here for the first time they felt the privation of desert life. So they chided Moses for having brought them away from the flesh-pots of Egypt.

4. Quails and manna were graciously given; but their murmuring was rebuked by the appearance of a fiery spot upon the cloud, which is described as "the glory of Jehovah." This is an expression of deep significance—glory is the glow of Jehovah's holiness. It is first mentioned in Exod. 16:7, 10.

5. At Rephidim, in *Wady-Feiran,* they came for the first time into collision with heathenism. The Amalekites attacked them in the rear. See Deut. 25:18. Joshua was appointed general, and fought bravely, while Moses prayed. The Amalekites were defeated. Read Eph. 6:13-18 for a description of the Christian soldier.

6. Passing on to Sinai, they formed a peaceful alliance

with Jethro, the king-priest of the Midianites, who blessed Israel's God, and they encamped before the mountain.

The Amalekites were the descendants of whom? See Gen. 36:12. Was Israel's victory over them especially noteworthy? See Exod. 17:14.

*7th Day: Review of Exod.* 1—18.

Write out your answers to any five of the following questions:

1. How long did Israel dwell in Egypt? Look up Exod. 12:40, and Gal. 3:17, and compare them with Gen. 15:13, and Acts 7:6.

2. Give Moses' excuses for not wishing to respond to Jehovah's call to deliver his people. See Exod. 3 and 4, and compare the "Third Day's" lesson in this Study.

3. In what respects was Moses a changed man when he returned from Midian? How do you account for the change?

4. Which of the ten plagues was directed against something held sacred and worshipped by the Egyptians? Study Exod. 7:14—11:10.

5. What did the magicians mean by the expression in Exod. 8:19, "This is the finger of God"? What light does it throw upon the interpretation of Exod. 31:18, 24:12, 32:16, and 34:28? Look up, also, Luke 11:20.

6. In the light of Oriental customs, was it ethically right for the Israelites to "ask" the Egyptians for jewels of silver? What was the author's judgment of it? Look up Exod. 12:35, 36.

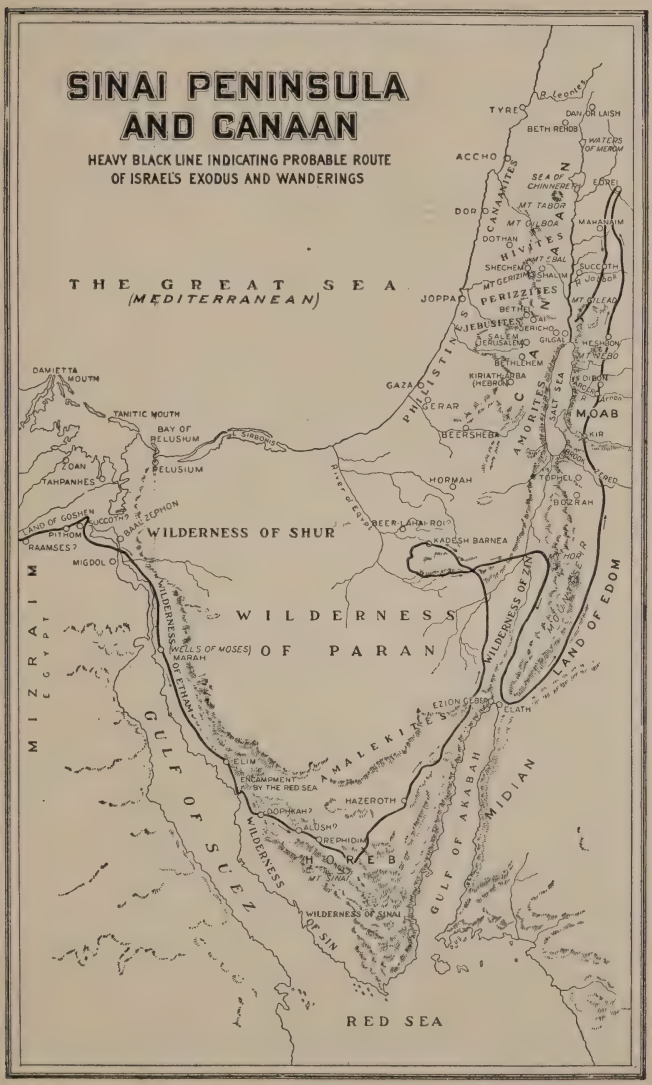
7. What hint is contained in Exod. 7:1 as to the function of a prophet?

8. Describe what an Israelitish youth would see and hear on the occasion of the Passover celebration. See Exod. 12 and 13.

9. From Exod. 18:10, 11, is it proper to infer that Jethro's God was known to the Midianites as Jehovah,

and that, as Budde holds, Moses got his knowledge of Jehovah from them? Compare Exod. 3:13, 14, and 6:3.

10. What good advice did Moses' father-in-law give him concerning the organization of a Supreme Court? Read Exod. 18:13-27.


SINAI PENINSULA
AND CANAAN
HEAVY BLACK LINE INDICATING PROBABLE ROUTE
OF ISRAEL'S EXODUS AND WANDERINGS
THE GREAT SEA
(MEDITERRANEAN)
R. LEONTES
TYRE
DAN OR LAISH
BETH REHOB
WATERS OF MEROM
ACCHO
SEA OF CHINNERETH
EDREI
DOR
MT TABOR
MT GILBOA
MAHANAIM
DOTHAN
SHECHEM
MT EBAL
SUCCOTH
MT GERIZIM
SHALIM
JOPPA
PERIZZITES
MT OLIVET
BETHEL
JEBUSITES
AI
JERICHO
GILGAL
SALEM
JERUSALEM
HEBRON
MACHPELAH
BETHLEHEM
DAMIETTA MOUTH
KIRIATH ARBA (HEBRON)
GAZA
MT DIBON
ARNON R.
TANITIC MOUTH
BAY OF PELUSIUM
MOAB
KIR
R. SIHOR
PELUSIUM
ZOAN
TAHPANHES
HORMAH
ELTOLAD
LAND OF GOSHEN
SUCCOTH
BOZRAH
BEER LAHAI ROI
WILDERNESS OF SHUR
KADESH BARNEA
PITHOM
RAAMSES?
MIGDOL
WILDERNESS OF PARAN
WILDERNESS OF ZIN
LAND OF EDOM
MIZRAIM
EGYPT
WILDERNESS OF ETHAM
(WELLS OF MOSES)
MARAH
EZION GEBER
ELATH
AMALEKITES
ELIM
ENCAMPMENT BY THE RED SEA
GULF OF SUEZ
HAZEROTH
JOPHKAH?
DISHO?
RITHMAH
REPHIDIM
WILDERNESS OF SHUR
HOREB
MT SINAI
GULF OF AKABAH
MIDIAN
WILDERNESS OF SIN
RED SEA

## STUDY VI.

### Moses, the Lawgiver (Exod. 19—Deut. 34).

*1st Day: The "Ten Words."*

Compare the two versions of the Decalogue as recorded in Exod. 20:1-17, and Deut. 5:6-21.

1. The Israelites arrived at Sinai in the third month after their departure from Egypt, and preparations were immediately made for the proclamation of the "Ten Words." Glance at Exod. 19.

2. These "Ten Words," or Commandments, were the *Magna Charta* of Israel's national independence—"the most wonderful thing in the history of the human race" (Davidson).

3. Intended primarily for a people who were infants in mind and morals, they have their limitations. They are brief, elementary and negative, being composed of precepts rather than principles. Yet they are so closely related to each other that if we violate one of them we are guilty of all. See James 2:10.

4. "Law is a rule of action" (Blackstone). It is also a fence. To get outside of an enclosure it is not necessary to leap over every length of the fence which bounds it. Compare James 2:10.

5. Law is also based on love, as the "Preamble" to the ten "Articles" informs us; for, having first redeemed Israel from slavery, Jehovah claims the right to legislate. Look up Exod. 20:2.

6. The following great fundamental truths are taught by these commandments, respectively: (1) To be right man-ward it is necessary to be right God-ward. (2) Ma-

terial helps in worship not only degrade God, but tend to darken man's religious instincts. (3) God's name must not be used in swearing to a falsehood. (4) One day in seven should be exclusively devoted to rest and worship. (5) Subordination in the home is necessary to secure subordination in the State. (6) The sacredness of life; (7) of home; (8) of property; (9) of character. (10) That "out of the heart are the issues of life."

7. Such precepts can never become obsolete. We do not discard the alphabet when we begin to read. For Moses' time they were a long step in advance; for Christ's time they were insufficient. He, too, spoke in imperatives.

Out of the following passages construct a corresponding Decalogue from the New Testament: (1) Mark 12:29; (2) John 4:24; (3) Matt. 5:34; (4) Mark 2:27; (5) Eph. 6:1; (6) Matt. 5:22; (7) Matt. 5:28; (8) 1 Cor. 10:24; (9) Eph. 4:25; (10) Roms. 7:7, to which Christ added a *new* commandment. Look up John 13:34.

### *2d Day: The "Two Tables" Broken and Renewed*

Read Exod. 32—34, and Deut. 9:8—10:5.

1. Jehovah's voice in the thunders of Sinai so terrified the Israelites that they stood afar off and begged that Moses become their mediator. Accordingly, Moses withdrew from the camp and betook himself to the mountain-top.

2. There God gave him the "two tables" on which were written the "Ten Words," and also the "ordinances" contained in Exod. 21—23, which compose "the book of the covenant." See Exod. 24:7. These are among the oldest written statutes extant. Very recently, however, a code of Hammurabi has come to light, which antedates "the book of the covenant" by at least five hundred years and demonstrates the great antiquity of codified law; it also shows how Moses sifted the laws of the Babylonians and

adapted them to the moral and religious requirements of Israel.

3. But while Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people lapsed into idolatry, and, strangely enough, just that form of idolatry which, if they had been forced by circumstances to return to Egypt, would have best secured for them a welcome from Pharaoh. The Egyptians worshipped the Apis-bull.

4. Moses came down from the mountain and found them rejoicing about their idol after the manner of the heathen. Seeing what they had done, and having the "two tables" in his hands, he dashed them to the ground as too great a *blessing* for so unworthy a people. Then he returned to the mountain and interceded with Jehovah not to destroy them utterly: he prays, Forgive their sin—; and, if not, blot me out of Thy book. No better proof is needed of the magnanimity of the great Lawgiver. Look up Exod. 32:31, 32.

5. Another period of forty days is passed with God upon the mountain, and the tables are renewed. The people this time stand the divine test. When Moses returns to the camp his face shines with the glory of God. After he delivers his message the glow is gone, and he covers his face with a veil; but when he returns to the mountain he takes the veil off.

Study Exod. 34:29-35 in the light of 2 Cor. 3:13 ff.; in the one may be found the programme of prophecy, in the other the programme of sanctification.

### *3d Day: The Tabernacle and Its Furniture.*

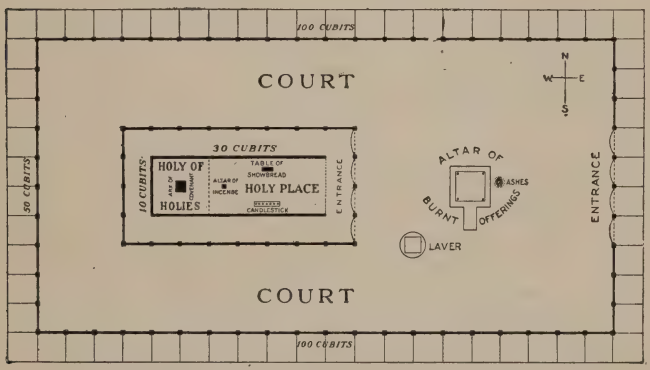
Glance hastily over Exod. 25—31 and 35—40.

1. The worship of a national God required a national sanctuary. It was Jehovah's desire to dwell among his people. Accordingly, He gave Moses all the necessary directions for the construction and furnishings of a sacred

tent or "tabernacle," and commanded: "See that thou make them after the pattern which hath been showed thee in the mount." See Exod. 25:40, and compare Hebs. 8:5.

2. The materials were willingly furnished by the people, who brought their offerings in such abundance that there was "much more than enough." See Exod. 36:5. Bezalel of the tribe of Judah, and Oholiab of the tribe of Dan, were designated to execute the work. To them Jehovah gave His Spirit and wisdom "to devise skilful works"; many "wise-hearted" women also assisted in weaving the curtains. For a catalogue of the things appointed to be made, look up Exod. 31:7-11.

3. The completed structure was set up on New Year's Day of the second year of the Exodus. See Exod. 40:17.




GROUND PLAN OF TABERNACLE

Most elaborate sacrifices were offered by the princes of the different tribes "for the dedication of the altar." See Num. 7:10-88.

4. "Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle." See Exod. 40:34. The whole was symbolic. It represented to the Hebrew mind two sides of truth: "God coming to them, and the manner of their approach to God." It was in a very true

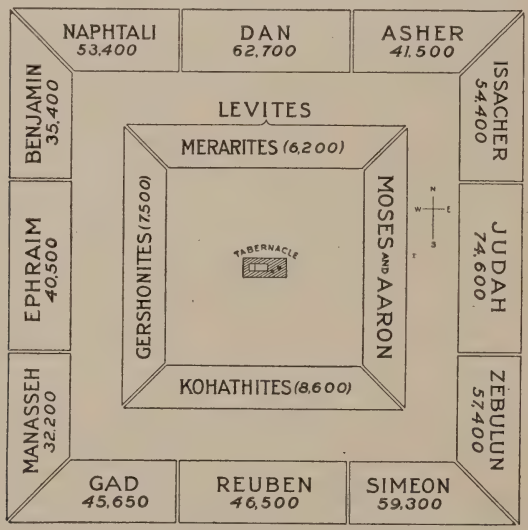
sense "the tent of meeting" and the center of the Jewish theocracy.

For the plan and furniture of "the tent of meeting" see the diagram (page 57).

*4th Day: From Sinai to Kadesh-Barnea.*

Read hastily Num. 10—14 and Deut. 1.

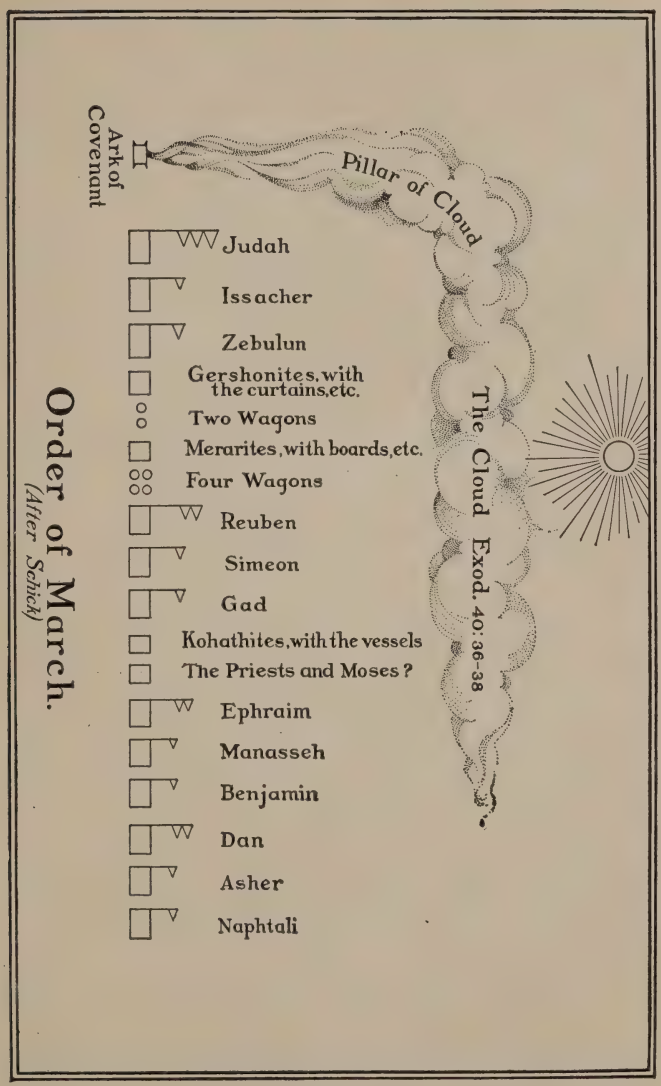
1. The time had come to make a second attempt to enter Canaan, this time from the south instead of from the southwest. Eleven months had been spent at Horeb, and about two months in journeying thither. Compare Exod. 19:1 with Num. 10:11.




PLAN OF ISRAEL'S ENCAMPMENT

2. Meanwhile, Moses had carefully organized the camp by tribes about the tabernacle, and when they journeyed they set forth in regular order. See Num. 10:12 ff., and study the accompanying plans.

3. At Taberah, which cannot be identified, the people


Order of March.
(After Schick)
Ark of Covenant
Pillar of Cloud
The Cloud Exod. 40: 36-38
Judah
Issacher
Zebulun
Gershonites, with the curtains, etc.
Two Wagons
Merarites, with boards, etc.
Four Wagons
Reuben
Simeon
Gad
Kohathites, with the vessels
The Priests and Moses ?
Ephraim
Manasseh
Benjamin
Dan
Asher
Naphtali

murmured and were burned. At Kibroth-hattaavah (which Palmer identifies with *Erweis el-Ebeirig*) the "mixed multitude" continued to lust after the flesh-pots of Egypt, and quails were sent in such superabundance that the blessing became a plague and many died. Meanwhile, because of the people's continued complaints, Moses was given a council of seventy elders, who shared with him the heavy burden of government.

4. Even Miriam and Aaron rebuked Moses for assuming that he was the only medium of divine revelation. In consequence whereof she was smitten with leprosy, and the camp was detained seven days at Hazeroth, the modern *'Ain Huderah*. Moses bore all these reproaches with extraordinary meekness. Read the encomium pronounced upon him by the historian in Num. 12:3, and compare the beatitude in Matt. 5:5. "Meekness never claims any personal rights."

5. Entering the wilderness of Paran about Kadesh, the Israelites, through fear, sent spies ahead to learn the character of the inhabitants of the land whom they were planning to dispossess. But all except Caleb and Joshua reported that the undertaking was too great. As a result, the people became so discouraged that they even proposed to appoint them a captain and return into Egypt; but, instead, God condemned them to wander forty years in the wilderness. Having desired to postpone conflict with the Canaanites, it *was* postponed.

What is the distance, according to Deut. 1:2, from Horeb to Kadesh? Did Hobab accompany them? Compare Num. 10: 29-32 with Judg. 1:16 and 4:11.

*5th Day: From Kadesh to Moab.*

Read Num. 16 and 20:1—21:20.

1. When the people realized their mistake, a revulsion of feeling suddenly seized them, and they resolved to go

up, even without the ark, and fight against the Canaanites. But "repentance came too late." They were beaten back to Hormah.

2. Of the subsequent thirty-eight years of their desert experience but little is recorded. It is probable, however, that they made Kadesh, which is best identified with *'Ain Kadis,* their permanent rendezvous. Here was the only perennial fountain in the district. During this period the older generation nearly all passed away.

3. Moved by jealousy, Korah and his followers revolted against the official representatives of the theocracy, and fourteen thousand seven hundred perished. At the beginning of the fortieth year Miriam died. While still at Kadesh, also, Moses lost momentarily his self-control and spoke vindictively to the Israelites, instead of speaking to the rock, as God had commanded. Lack of self-control is evidence of lack of faith. In general, during these years, the tribes had become consolidated into a warlike host, and, being desert-bred, the new generation was of a hardier type.

4. Having abandoned the plan of taking Canaan from the south, Moses now courteously sought from the King of Edom permission to cross his territory. But the request was bluntly refused. About the same time, Aaron died, and they halted for thirty days in sorrow over their national loss.

5. The outlook was discouraging. Though they won a small victory over the King of Arad, it seemed wiser to turn southward and compass Edom. The route followed is difficult to trace. The names of many of the stations recorded in Num. 33 are those of mere "encampments," and naturally cannot be identified. It was a terrible wilderness—hot, barren and infested with serpents. The people murmured and were bitten. But Moses made a brazen serpent and set it on a pole, and whosoever looked was healed.

6. Finally, at the brook Zered, the principal confluent

of the Arnon, they passed out of the desert into the table-lands of Moab.

What application is made in John 3:14 of Moses' brazen serpent? Look up Isa. 45:22 in the same connection.

### *6th Day: Victories Over Sihon and Og.*

Glance over Num. 21:21—25:18 and Deut. 2 and 3.

1. The Israelites were commanded not to vex the Moabites and Ammonites, who were related to them through Lot, but the territory of the Amorites was to be seized. Sihon, King of Heshbon, was the first to offer resistance. He was defeated at Jahaz. Og, also, King of Bashan, came out to battle at Edrei, and he and his sixty impregnable cities in Argob were taken.

2. These two great victories gave the Israelites prestige among the tribes round about. Even Balak, King of Moab, who had no cause for alarm, as his territory was exempt by God's command, feared greatly. He entered into an alliance with the Midianites, and dispatched embassies to Balaam, the famous soothsayer of the far northeast, imploring him to come and pronounce a curse, or "spell," upon the hosts of Israel; for it was the belief in ancient times, as to-day in Palestine, that the blessing or curse of eminent religious men carried with it good or evil. Large reward was also offered him.

3. Balaam responded reluctantly, but with God's permission. Yet God was angry at him for going, because he went *non-committed.* All along the way Balaam still hoped to secure the divine permission to curse Israel. The voice of the speaking ass that rebuked him, therefore, may well be explained as the voice of conscience. Though a heathen soothsayer, the Spirit of God so overpowered him that he could only bless. His final parable was a prediction of unique and Messianic value. Look up carefully Num. 24:17.

4. Up to this point, Balaam appears as a man of un-

compromising rectitude and conscientiousness. But the subsequent history informs us that the Israelites, "through the counsel of Balaam," were seduced to play the harlot with the Midianites under the cloak of religion. It is also stated that Balaam was slain by the Israelites along with five kings of the Midianites. Balaam was a deceiver. Look up Num. 31:8, 16, and also Rev. 2:14.

From Amos 2:7, 8, what, probably, was the most enticing feature of the religion of the Canaanites?

*7th Day: Moses' End—Review.*

Read Deut. 31—34.

1. The life of Moses divides itself naturally into three equal periods of forty years: the first being spent in Egypt; the second in Midian; the third in the work of the Exodus.

2. Among the last acts of the great Lawgiver in the plains of Moab were: (1) Taking a census of the people, who now numbered 601,730, as against 603,550 at Sinai; (2) the appointment of Joshua to succeed him; (3) the allotment of the territory east of the Jordan to the two and a half tribes; (4) the designation of six cities of refuge for persons who might unwittingly shed innocent blood; and (5) the delivery, just before his death, of the exhortations contained in the book of Deuteronomy; for "nothing is more probable than that Moses supplemented the legislation of Sinai and Kadesh by enactments adapted to the altered conditions of the tribes, which had now finally emerged from the wilderness" (Ottley).

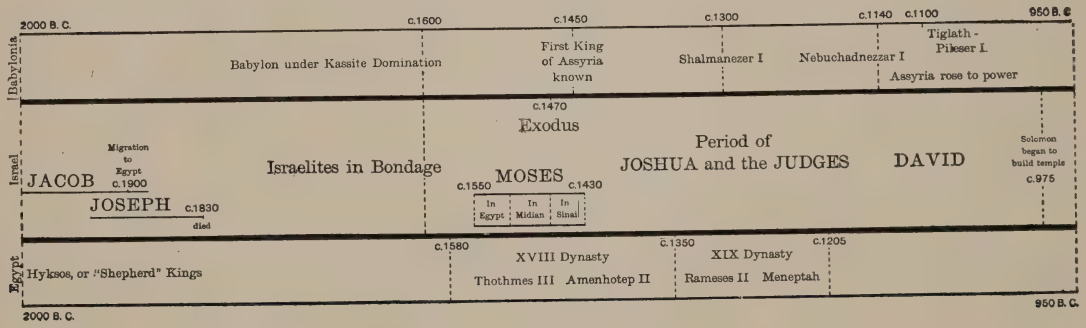
3. And now the time for his departure was drawing nigh. At the divine command, he climbed, alone, to the top of Mount Nebo—"God's natural observatory"—from which he viewed the land he was denied the privilege of entering. So Moses died in the land of Moab, and God buried him, and, as Thomas Fuller quaintly adds, "buried also his grave."

4. Moses' character was many-sided. Though pre-eminently an emancipator and a lawgiver, he was great as a prophet, judge, priest, theologian and executive magistrate. The most conspicuous element in his character was *faith.* Look up Hebs. 11:23-29. Another of his outstanding qualities was *meekness,* and a third was *courage.* He also possessed many other crowning excellencies, such as calmness, firmness, deliberation, foresight, wisdom, patience and self-control. But not all of these were conspicuous in his earlier years. They were cultivated and acquired.

5. The great secret of his life was the vision of the burning bush. From that time forward he lived only as the instrument and mouthpiece of Jehovah.

What is the full significance of the promise contained in Deut. 18:13?

## CHRONOLOGY: FROM THE PATRIARCHS TO SOLOMON



## STUDY VII.

### Aaron, the First Great High Priest.

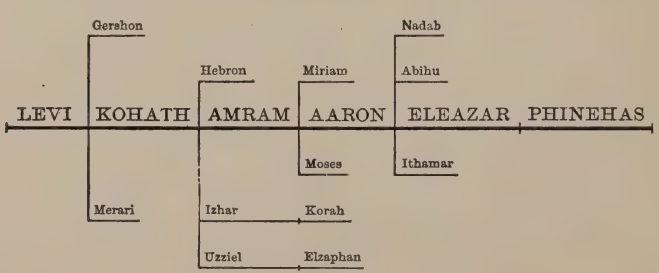
*1st Day: Aaron's Preparation for the Priesthood.*

Glance through Exod. 4—12.

1. In olden times the head of the family acted as priest, and the home was the sanctuary. It was so even when the Passover was first inaugurated. See Exod. 12. But with the organization of Israel's tribes into a nation there arose the desire for an orderly system of worship. Moses' older brother was the first to be exalted to the high and holy position of the priesthood.

2. Born in slavery, he did not enjoy the privilege of court life such as Moses did, but he had what Moses to some extent must have lacked—the benign influence of a godly home.

3. Aaron was three years older than Moses. See Exod.




7:7. His wife's name was Elisheba, who bore him four sons. The genealogy of these two mighty brothers is given in Exod. 6:16-25.

4. Having spent the first eighty-three years of his life

in Goshen, Aaron probably became well acquainted not only with the language of the Egyptians, but with their priestly rites and practices also. But what is specially noteworthy is the fact that by some unknown influence Aaron was led to anticipate his banished brother's return. Note particularly Exod. 4:14. Evidently he, too, longed for the deliverance of his people. Tradition says that Aaron had originally warned Moses to flee to Midian.

Micah, alone of all the prophets, mentions Aaron. Look up what he says about him in 6:4.

*2d Day: Aaron's Sin and Consecration.*

Read Exod. 29, 32, and Lev. 8—10.

1. Though Aaron had bravely stood by Moses in the contest with Pharaoh, and, with Hur, had patiently upheld his hands during Israel's conflict with Amalek; yet, when left forty days alone at Sinai, he was shaken and "went down like a broken reed" before the clamor of the idolatrous people.

2. Great orators have great temptations, one of the subtlest of which is the love of popularity. Aaron was vehement, but vacillating. He easily yielded to the fickle cry of the people for a god whom they might see, and made them an Egyptian image; though both he and they had solemnly covenanted to obey the Ten Commandments.

3. But while Aaron's weakness cannot easily be condoned, it was doubtless sincerely repented of and freely forgiven; for the Psalmist speaks of him as "the saint of Jehovah." See Ps. 106:16.

4. In consequence of Israel's sin, Moses removed his tent outside the camp and called it the "Tent of Meeting." This was calculated to make the people feel their judicial abandonment by God. Then Aaron and his sons were set apart and consecrated to the sacred office of the priesthood. They were invested with appropriate garments,

anointed with sacred oil, and sprinkled with sacrificial blood; after which sacrifices were offered, and Aaron was inaugurated as "the priest."

5. Hardly, however, were Aaron and his sons initiated into the holy office, when Nadab and Abihu "offered strange fire before Jehovah," and as a result were smitten dead. In keeping with heathen practices, probably, they had partaken somewhat freely of wine, and had carelessly offered sacrifices at a wrong time and in the wrong place. For proof see Lev. 10:9.

6. The sudden loss of two sons must have fallen with terrible severity upon the great high priest; but no murmuring word escaped his consecrated lips—he "held his peace."

Which commandment did Aaron violate in setting up the golden calf—the first or second?

*3d Day: The Principal Sacrifices.*

Read Lev. 1—7.

1. In the opening chapters of the book of Leviticus, which purports to have been given by Moses "in Mount Sinai," the five principal sacrifices of the Levitical system are described and their ritual defined. Study the scheme which follows:

2. One fact in connection with the sin and trespass offerings is especially striking, viz., that no sacrifice is provided in the entire Mosaic system for those who *wilfully* commit sin. Note the emphasis laid on the clause, "If any one shall sin unwittingly," in Lev. 4:2, 22, 27, 5:15, 17, 18, and Num. 15:27, 28, 29; to which in v. 30 is added, "But the soul that doeth aught *with a high hand* shall be cut off from among his people."

3. The meaning is this: Israel stood in covenant relation to God. The sacrificial system was provided for sins committed *wilhin* the covenant. "Sins done with a high

# THE FIVE PRINCIPAL LEVITICAL SACRIFICES

| NAME of OFFERING | "BURNT" [Lev. 1.] | "MEAL" [Lev. 2] | "PEACE" [Lev. 3] | "SIN" [Lev. 4:1-5:13] | "GUILT" [Lev. 5:14-6:7] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SIGNIFICANCE | Consecration and Thanksgiving | A Gift to Secure God's Favor | Friendship and Fellowship | Expiation and Atonement | Satisfaction and Reinstatement |
| VICTIMS OFFERED | 1. Bullock<br>2. Ram<br>3. He-goat<br>4. Turtle doves or young pigeons | 1. Fine flour<br>2. Oil<br>3. Frankincense<br>4. Salt<br>5. No leaven | 1. A male of female of herd or flock<br>2. No pigeons | 1. Bullock, for priest or congregation<br>2. He-goat or ram, for ruler<br>3. Female kid or lamb or birds, or even fine flour, for one of common people | A ram without blemish worth a definite price, for rich and poor alike |
| WHERE PRESENTED | "At the door of the tent of meeting" | "To Aaron's sons" | "At the door of the tent of meeting" | "Unto the door of the tent of meeting" | "Unto Jehovah" "Unto the Priest" |
| BY WHOM | "Any man of you" | "Any one" | Any one | By one sinning "unwittingly" | By one sinning "unwittingly" |
| THE RITUAL OBSERVED | The Offerer:<br>1. Imposed his hands<br>2. Killed victim<br>The Priest:<br>1. Sprinkled blood<br>2. Burned the flesh and fat | 1. Offerer took out a handful<br>2. Priest burned it as a memorial<br>3. Remainder fell to priests | The Offerer:<br>1. Imposed his hands<br>2. Killed victim<br>The Priest:<br>1. Sprinkled blood<br>2. Burned fat<br>3. Received the breast | The Offerer:<br>1. Imposed his hands<br>2. Killed victim<br>The Priest:<br>1. Sprinkled blood<br>2. Burned fat<br>3. Received the flesh | 1. Ritual same as that of "Sin" offering<br>2. Trespass estimated by Priest<br>3. One-fifth added for the Priest<br>4. Offerer had no share |
| SPECIAL CHARACTERISTIC FEATURE | Wholly burnt | Offerer had no share | Sacrificial meal which followed | Disposal of the blood on altar of incense | The one-fifth which fell to priest |
| WHERE PRACTICED IN OT. | By Noah [Gen. 8:20] | By Jacob to Esau [32:13] | By Jacob [31:54] | By Hezekiah [2. Chron. 29:21] | By Philistines [1 Sam. 6:4] |

hand cut a man off from the covenant people. But for all sins of error, which included not only sins done ignorantly, but sins of infirmity, though committed consciously, the sacrificial system provided an expiation" (Davidson).

Look up the *locus classicus* on "atonement" in Lev. 17:11.

*4th Day: The Great Day of Atonement.*

Study Lev. 16.

1. The death of Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abihu, was the occasion of a new enactment prescribing that Aaron should not come "at all times into the holy place within the veil . . . , that he die not." The time designated was the tenth day of the seventh month, which was thereafter known as the "Day of Atonement"—the only *fast* day enjoined by law in the Hebrew calendar.

2. On it, the people are charged to "afflict their souls." It was a day, therefore, of self-denial and humiliation, of atonement and cleansing, and a Sabbath of solemn rest. See vs. 29-31. It was the culminating institution of the Levitical system, with a ritual of the most comprehensive character, Aaron alone officiating.

3. Twice the high priest entered into the inmost sanctuary: once, for himself and his house, with the blood of a bullock, which he sprinkled before the mercy seat; a second time, for the people and the sanctuary, with the blood of the goat appointed for a sin offering, which he likewise sprinkled before the mercy seat.

4. On coming out of the Most Holy Place, a living goat was brought near, and the high priest, having placed both his hands upon its head, confessed over it all the sins of the people; after which the goat was led away into the wilderness for "Azazel," or dismissal, or, perhaps better, for the evil spirit dwelling in the wilderness, for here we seem to have a relic of ancient demon worship. Herod-

otus describes a similar practice among the Egyptians. The Bedouins of Sinai are accustomed to cast a sacrificial sheep over the rocks of Jebel Serbal.

5. The slain goat made atonement for the sins of the people which had escaped recognition; the goat which was led away symbolized the visible and complete removal of all sin from the nation's midst. Compare Ps. 103:12.

What does Heb. 9:12 say, in contrast to Aaron, of Christ's entering into the Holy Place?

*5th Day: Modern Criticism and the Pentateuch.*

Read Wellhausen's article, "Israel," in the Encyclopædia Britannica.

1. The essence of the modern theory in its bearing upon the history of Israel may be summed up as follows: (1) That Moses was an *oral* lawgiver only, having written little or nothing himself; (2) that the Pentateuchal laws represent different stages in Israel's historical development; and (3) that one code of law succeeded but did not entirely supersede another.

2. Three distinct and separate strata of law are discovered, viz.: (1) The book of the covenant in Exod. 21—23; (2) the code in Deut. 12—26; and (3) the priestly laws in Leviticus. These codes first appeared in literary form about 800, 621 and 444 B. C., respectively.

3. The arguments in support of this hypothesis are correlated about five main points, as seen in the accompanying diagram, which illustrates the manner in which the laws and regulations of Israel were gradually evolved.

4. But, attractive as this development theory is, (1) it boldly challenges in several instances the explicit statements of Scripture, *e.g.,* Deut. 31:9, 24—26; (2) it assumes that monotheism was gradually evolved out of polytheism, whereas the uniform teaching of the Bible is that primitive mankind degenerated in religion and morals;

## THE MODERN CRITICAL THEORY OF WELLHAUSEN

Showing the alleged evolution of Israel's religion

| ISRAEL'S PRACTICE | Till c.900 B.C. | c.750 B.C. | 621 B.C. | 444 B.C. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| As to the Sanctuary | Could worship anywhere | No exclusive sanctuary as yet | Unity of sanctuary required by law | Unity Presupposed |
| The Sacrifices | Sacrifices were mere meals | Without Ritual | Only two sacrifices known: Peace and Burnt offerings | Sin and Guilt offerings added.<br>Ritual becomes elaborate |
| The Feasts | None prescribed | Three, but all agrarian,<br>No passover as yet | Becoming historical: the passover is known | New names, and entirely historical |
| The Priests | Anyone could offer sacrifices | Anyone still free to sacrifice | Only the Levites allowed to do so | Only the sons of Aaron |
| Their Provisions | Whatever came up on a flesh hook | Priest took what was given him | "Shoulder, two cheeks and maw," the Priests' portion | Flesh of the Sin and Guilt offerings.<br>Tithes and 48 cities. |

(3) to substantiate the theory, the Pentateuch is subjected to an analysis which, to the unbiased mind, often appears arbitrary, inconsistent and contrary to good sense.

5. Fortunately, a man's personal salvation need not depend upon his critical views regarding the Pentateuch. There were doubtless many later additions made to the laws left by Moses. To what extent, it is impossible to determine; but there is no reason for supposing that Moses could not have codified law as easily as Hammurabi.

The key to the whole question is "the book of the law," found by Hilkiah, which the modern theory identifies with Deuteronomy. See 2 Kings 22:8.

*6th Day: Aaron's Later Years.*

Read Num. 17, 20 and 23—29.

1. An hereditary priesthood had been established at Sinai, and Aaron and his sons had been placed in charge of the service of the tabernacle; Moses was the authority "over all." Aaron was leader in the Church; Moses in the State. Aaron was yielding and pliable; Moses was firm and unbending.

2. At Hazeroth, Aaron is seen to challenge the prophetic prerogatives of Moses; at Kadesh, his own priestly authority is challenged. Look up Num. 12:2 and 16:3. Korah's rebellion was aimed at the authority of Moses and Aaron, the representatives of Jehovah; hence treason.

3. Plague was sent; but Aaron, with priestly sympathy, stood between the living and the dead. Quietly and with becoming dignity he waited until his pre-eminence had been established. His budding rod became a token to the congregation of Jehovah's anger against the rebels. "Never again did Levi make the attempt to gain the possession of the priesthood, nor Reuben to seize the reins of government" (Stanley).

4. At Meribah, along with Moses, Aaron doubted, and in consequence was doomed to die before the end of the wilderness journey. See Num. 20:12, 24. Finally, at the command of Jehovah, Moses solemnly took the great high priest up to the summit of Mount Hor, stripped him of his priestly attire, and put it upon Eleazar, his son. So Aaron died there, in the top of the mount, on the first day of the fifth month of the fortieth year. Compare Num. 33:38.

5. Thus sublimely passed away the first great high priest of Israel. "It was a Pisgah, not of prospect, but of retrospect" (Stanley). While he did not possess the qualities of insight, promptitude, energy and firmness for which Moses was pre-eminent, "he excelled his brother in the passive virtues of patience and endurance" (Taylor).

Note from Heb. 5:1-4 that Aaron's call to the priesthood was a call to gentleness and sympathy.

*7th Day: Review of Israel's Wanderings.*

Prepare answers to any five of the following questions:

1. How long did the Israelites remain at Horeb? See Study VI, Fourth Day.

2. What very important events happened at Horeb? See Exod. 19—40 and Num. 1—10.

3. What different motives are given in Exod. 20:11 and Deut. 5:15 for observing the fourth commandment?

4. Were certain laws of Moses abrogated by Jesus Christ? Compare Exod. 21:24 with Matt. 5:39, and Deut. 24:1 with Mark 10:4, 5.

5. Solon said that his laws were not by any means the best which he could have made, but that they were the best which he could get the Athenians to accept. In what sense was this true of Moses?

6. What does Paul say, in Gal. 3:24, was the function of the law?

7. What essential difference exists between the goal of the Law as contained in Lev. 19:2 and that of the Gospel in Matt. 5:48?

8. Is there not a hint in Deut. 1:2 that possibly the exhortations in Deuteronomy were first delivered to the *older* generation en route from Sinai northward, and that thirty-eight years later Moses redelivered them to the *younger* generation in the plains of Moab?

9. What became of the brazen serpent which Moses set up? See 2 Kings 18:4.

10. Is Psalm 90, which has been called "the funeral hymn of the world," appropriately ascribed to Moses as its author?

## STUDY VIII.

### Joshua, the Captain of Israel.

*1st Day: The Passage of the Jordan.*

Read Josh. 1—4.

1. Toward the close of the forty years' sojourn in the wilderness, by divine direction, and in the presence of Eleazar the priest, Moses publicly ordained Joshua to be his successor. See Num. 27:18-23. And just before his death Moses presented Joshua in the tabernacle, that he might receive his charge from Jehovah. See Deut. 31:14, 23.

2. Then, after the death of Moses, Jehovah spoke to Joshua, saying: Go over this Jordan. Only be strong, and observe all the commandments of Moses, "that thou mayest have good *success* whithersoever thou goest." "Success" has been defined as "moving in a straight line morally." That is victory.

3. With Joshua's success a new era is entered upon in the career of Israel. Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, who had taken so conspicuous a part in the conflict with Midian, and with whom God had made a "covenant of an everlasting priesthood," was not to become the successor of Moses. Look up Num. 25:10-13. He was "the priest."

4. Joshua, on the other hand, had fought with Amalek. He had been the personal attendant of Moses, and had had the charge of the tabernacle. Accordingly, he was the one chosen to be the leader of the armed host of Israel in the conquest of the promised land. He was neither a preacher nor a prophet, but a soldier.

5. His first task was the crossing of the Jordan. It was spring, and the river was at its highest. Preparations were made three days in advance. The priests bore the ark. The two and a half tribes, to whom the territory east of the Jordan had been assigned, were reminded of their promise to accompany their brethren. The day came. The waters "turned backwards," and all the people crossed over on dry ground. Read Psalm 114. An Arab historian records the sudden damming of the river by a landslip in A. D. 1267.

6. At Gilgal twelve stones were set up as a national memorial, and the first sanctuary of the Holy Land was established. "On that day Jehovah magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel."

What is the practical lesson contained in Josh. 3:4? Can it be that we are not to press precipitately on the heels of half-disclosed providences?

*2d Day: First Victories—Jericho and Ai.*

Read Josh. 5—8.

1. Though the story of Israel's conquest of Canaan is largely secular, still the discerning reader has no difficulty in seeing throughout the guiding hand of God.

2. What transpired at Gilgal is especially instructive. There they ate for the first time of the produce of the land, and the manna ceased; the Passover was observed, and the Israelites born in the wilderness were circumcised. These were bold deeds to perform on the very edge of the enemies' territory; but they were religious. Most striking of all, an angel with drawn sword stood over against Joshua at Gilgal and demanded that he remove his shoes from off his feet. This incident conveys "the finest religious conception in the book of Joshua, and is a noble illustration of the truth that, in the great causes of God upon the earth, the leaders, however supreme and solitary they seem, are themselves led" (G. A. Smith).

3. The capture of Jericho and Ai mark the first stage in a long conflict. While still in Moab, Joshua had sent two spies to view the land and Jericho.

4. Israel's fighting force numbered forty thousand. See Joshua 4:13. Jericho, the only important town in the Jordan Valley and the key to Western Palestine, was taken by the circumvention of its walls and the blowing of trumpets, "the first prize of the conquest." About it was a vast grove of majestic palms (Deut. 34:3). Its possessions were "devoted" to Jehovah, and the city was cursed. Rahab the harlot was spared.

5. Three thousand of Israel's valiant men were next dispatched to take Ai, lying to the northwest; but they were put to flight and smitten. On inquiry, it was discovered that Achan of the tribe of Judah had coveted and appropriated to himself silver and gold and a Babylonish mantle. Here is a hint, as Friedrich Delitzsch observes, that "when the twelve tribes of Israel invaded the land of Canaan they entered a country which belonged absolutely to the domain of Babylonish civilization."

6. Achan was punished, after which Ai was successfully taken, and the standard of the conquerors was planted within two and a half miles of Bethel, the sacred sanctuary of the patriarchs.

From Josh. 7:19, how can the sinner *begin* to glorify God?

*3d Day: The Battle of Beth-horon.*

Read Josh. 9 and 10.

1. Joshua showed remarkable military skill in the plan of campaign which he adopted in the conquest of Canaan. By his victories over Jericho and Ai an important pass had now been secured, and thereby the interior of the country became accessible. Like an immense wedge, the Israelites had divided their enemies, north from south. Their camp remained at Gilgal.

2. Joshua, however, made a serious blunder in allowing

himself to be deceived through the guile of the Gibeonites. Yet the compact made with them led to "one of the most important battles in the history of the world" (Stanley).

3. Five strong kings of the Canaanites, headed by Adoni-zedek, King of Jerusalem (whose leadership is incidentally confirmed by the Tel el-Amarna tablets), having heard of the traitorous conduct of the Gibeonites, leagued themselves together to go up and smite Gibeon. The Gibeonites in terror appealed to Joshua for help.

4. By a forced march Joshua, at the head of his army, went up from Gilgal, came upon them suddenly, and chased them, slaying them with very great slaughter all the way from Gibeon, via Upper Beth-horon, unto Makkedah. At Lower Beth-horon a fearful hail-storm fatally overtook the few remaining. The victory was crowned by the capture and slaughter of the five confederate kings, who had taken refuge in a cavern at Makkedah.

5. This, in brief, is the account as it is given in prose. But, as in the case of the story of Deborah's victory over Sisera (Judg. 4 and 5), there follows an account in poetry, manifestly a quotation from the ancient Book of Jashar, which has been adapted by the historian to enhance his own description of this wonderful triumph. See Josh. 10:12-15. This event only of all Joshua's victories is referred to in Prophecy. See Isa. 28:21.

Is it any more necessary to think that the sun really "stood still" than that, in Judg. 5:20, "the stars in their courses" actually fought against Sisera?

*4th Day: The Battle of Merom.*

Read Josh. 11 and 12.

1. Failure in not garrisoning Jerusalem before turning northward was another mistake on Joshua's part; for, as a result, Judah became isolated from the northern tribes.

2. The battle of Beth-horon had struck a decisive blow in the south, but the north still remained unconquered. Under Jabin, King of Hazor, a powerful coalition was formed by those whom Joshua had cut off from assisting their friends in the south, and a final struggle was made to hold the country against the invaders at the waters of Merom, in northern Galilee.

3. Again Joshua, with the divine sanction, moved quickly northward from Gilgal, hocked the horses of the Canaanites and burned their chariots, and smote them down until "there remained none that breathed." This was the crowning victory of Joshua's life. With the capture of Hazor the war closed.

4. A general summary of Joshua's campaigns is given in the closing verses of Josh. 11 and 12. How long he was actively engaged in warfare with the Canaanites we are not informed. Josh. 11:18 states that it was a "long time." From a comparison of Josh. 14:7, 10 with Deut. 2:14, however, it would seem that "the war of conquest occupied about seven years" (Driver).

5. To many, the merciless extermination of the Canaanites presents a moral difficulty, because it is so far removed from the spirit of the gospel. But it should not be forgotten that the Israelites possessed a burning indignation against moral evil. The Canaanites, on the contrary, knew nothing of purity or morality. They were the enemies, therefore, not only of the Israelites, but of the world. Hence, "Joshua's sword," as Arnold puts it, "in its bloodiest executions, wrought a work of mercy for all the countries of the earth to the very ends of the world. The Israelites fought not for themselves only, but for us."

Altogether, how many kings were conquered by Joshua? See Josh. 12:24.

CANAAN
AS DIVIDED AMONG THE TWELVE TRIBES
SIDON
ARAM, SYRIA
DAMASCUS
MT. HERMON
MT. LEBANON
TYRE
LAISH
KEDESH
HAZOR
ARGOB
BASHAN
HAVOTH JAIR
MANASSEH
MT. CARMEL
ASHTAROTH KARNAIM
GOLAN
ASHER
ZEBULUN
NAPHTALI
Waters of Merom
TABOR
MEGIDDO
JEZREEL
ISSACHAR
TAANACH
BETH SHAN
MAHANAIM
SALCAH
JABESH GILEAD
SAMARIA
MANASSEH
GAD
RAMOTH GILEAD
MT. EBAL
SHECHEM
MT. GERIZIM
Jabbok
THE GREAT SEA
JOPPA
EPHRAIM
GILGAL
SHILOH
OPHRAH
DAN
BETHEL
AI
BENJAMIN
RABBATH AMM
ERONO
GIBEON
JERICHO
HESHBON
MT. NEBO
MEDEBA
ASHDOD
BETH-SHEMESH
JERUSALEM
GATH
KIRJATH-JEARIM
ASCALON
JARMUTH
REUBEN
JUDAH
GAZA
HEBRON
ENGEDI
BEZER
Arnon
MAON
The Salt Sea
AR OR RABBATH MOAB
BEERSHEBA
KIR OF MOAB
AROER
REHOBOTH
SIMEON
HORMAH
AMALEKITES
KADESH BARNEA
MT. SEIR
EDOM

*5th Day: The Division of the Territory.*

Glance over Josh. 13—21.

1. And now the time had come for the apportionment of the territory to the several tribes. This is described in the latter half of the book of Joshua, which has been called by Stanley "the geographical manual of the Holy Land, the Domesday Book of the conquest of Palestine."

2. The land was probably divided before Israel's enemies were all subdued. See Josh. 13:1-7. Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh retained, of course, the possessions allotted to them by Moses on the east side of the Jordan. Caleb was given Hebron. See Josh. 14:13-15 and 15:13-19. The "hill country" proper was assigned to Judah, Ephraim and Manasseh. All these allotments were made while the camp was still at Gilgal, Joshua being assisted by Eleazar the priest and a commission of the elders. See Josh. 14:1, 6.

3. The other seven tribes seem to have been backward in making a choice or in expressing a preference; hence, their allotments were delayed. Look up Josh. 18:3. Meanwhile, the "Tent of Meeting" was removed from Gilgal to Shiloh, in Mount Ephraim, which was the natural center of the country.

4. At length, in Shiloh, Joshua cast lots for Benjamin and Simeon, who received a slice of Judah's assignment, and also for Zebulun, Issacher, Asher, Naphtali and Dan. Glance again through Josh. 18-20. To Joshua, also, there was given an inheritance. What was its name? See Josh. 19:49, 50.

5. Three "cities of refuge" were definitely appointed—Kadesh, Shechem and Hebron—to correspond to those on the east of the Jordan—Golan, Ramoth and Bezer—which had been designated by Moses. See Josh. 20. In addition to these, the Levites were also given forty-two cities

as their personal inheritance, and the work of division was at an end. Look up Josh. 21.

For what purpose were "cities of refuge" appointed? Look up Num. 35:6, 11, 12.

*6th Day: The Loyalty of the Transjordanic Tribes.*

Read Josh. 22.

1. Now that the task of conquering the country was accomplished, the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh returned from Shiloh, with Joshua's blessing, to their homes on the east of Jordan.

2. Coming down to the region about Jordan, it occurred to them to erect a witness "that Jehovah is God." (The Christian erects such a memorial every time he wins a victory over sin.) So they built "an altar by the Jordan, a great altar to look upon."

3. When, however, the western tribes heard of what they had done, they were filled with consternation, and came together at Shiloh for a council of war. Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest, and ten princes were dispatched at once to inquire into the apparent "trespass."

4. They assumed that the eastern tribes intended thereby to rebel against Jehovah; for, "an altar besides the altar of Jehovah" was in direct violation of the law of Deuteronomy which required "unity of the place of worship." Compare Deut. 12:5.

5. The Transjordanic tribes, on the contrary, pained that they should be accused of rebellion, most solemnly affirmed to Phinehas and his fellows that "out of carefulness they had done so," in order that they and their children might never be cut off from their brethren on the west side of the river.

6. Moreover, they further averred that the altar which they had built was not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice, but as a "witness" to their faith in the God of Shiloh.

And they strengthened their affirmation by an appeal to God in a series of divine names which is really remarkable. Look up Josh. 22:22. It is the solemn text on which, it is said, Welsh, the minister of the army of the Covenanters, preached before the fatal battle of Bothwell Bridge in 1679.

7. When Phinehas and his associates heard the apology of these Transjordanic tribesmen they returned to their homes "pleased."

What had Moses' counsel been to these Transjordanic tribes? Look up Num. 32:23. Do sins of *omission* find one out?

*7th Day: Joshua's Farewell Address.*

Read Josh. 23 and 24.

1. When Joshua became old, he gathered together the heads and officers of all Israel to Shechem and charged them to remain loyal to Jehovah. He reminded them of their idolatrous ancestors, who, on the other side of the Euphrates, had served other gods, and how their fathers, only a generation before, had worshipped idols in the land of Egypt. Look up Josh. 24:2, 14.

2. The people cordially responded, promising that they would never forsake Jehovah. Thereupon, Joshua made a covenant with them in Shechem and wrote down a memorandum of their promise in a book. See Josh. 24:25, 26.

3. Finally, at the advanced age of one hundred and ten, "the servant of Jehovah" and the captain of Israel's hosts died, and was buried in the border of his own inheritance in Timnath-serah. Eleazar, likewise, the son of Aaron, died, and was buried in the hill of Phinehas, his son. The bones of Joseph, also, were laid to rest in the vicinity of Shechem. See Josh. 24:32.

4. Joshua was a great warrior. He was a man born to command, and showed extraordinary wisdom in his several campaigns. Indeed, his name, like "Hosea" and

"Jesus," signified "salvation." Notice the allusions to him in Acts 7:45, and Heb. 4:8, which are obscured in the Authorized Version.

5. He led the Israelites into Canaan from the east, thus attacking the enemy at their weakest point. While the chosen people had been wandering in the desert, in the providence of God the peoples of Canaan had been broken up into many petty principalities, as the Tel el-Amarna tablets warrant us in concluding, and were unwilling to fight against a common enemy. Hence Joshua's signal victory, humanly speaking. But, in fact, God was the real conqueror of Israel's enemies.

"Faint not! Fight on!
To-morrow comes the song."

—BABCOCK.

## STUDY IX.

### The Judges, Israel's Tribal "Saviours."

*1st Day: Othniel and the Mesopotamians.*

Read Judg. 1:1—3:11.

1. Joshua left no successor to subdue those portions of Canaan still occupied by the Canaanites. Each tribe was expected to conquer its own foes. In the absence of any central authority, or uniform and organized government, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." See Judg. 17:6, 21:25.

2. This was the period of Israel's transition from the nomadic to the agricultural state; an age of lawless might and unrestrained license; an age "of alternate disaster and recovery, both moral and material" (Wade); of "turbulence and transition" (Hommel); of "political disorganization" (Lias); "rugged and unformed" (Robertson), and "terribly barbaric" (Sayce); "Israel's Iron Age" (Dods).

3. The horrible tragedy related in Judg. 19 f. of the Levite's concubine, and the story of Micah and the migration of the Danites in Judg. 17 f., well illustrate the temper of the people and their disposition to lapse into idolatry. On the other hand, the beautiful little idyl contained in the book of Ruth, which belongs to the same general period, furnishes a most delightful relief to the dark age now under consideration (cf. Ruth 1:1).

4. The whole account, though exceedingly fragmentary, is encased in a sort of framework, or "philosophy of history," and furnishes, as Vatke has expressed it, "an almost

rhythmical alternation of idolatry and subjugation, return to Jehovah and liberation." See especially Judg. 2:6—3:6.

5. The first "oppression" recorded was that by Cushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, who seems to have overrun the whole country, from north to south, and harassed Israel for eight years. At length, Othniel, the brother of Caleb, of the tribe of Judah, was raised up as "saviour," who delivered Israel from the Mesopotamian yoke, "and the land had rest forty years."

In what sense did the Canaanites who were left in the land "prove" Israel? Look up Judg. 3:1, 2, 4.

*2d Day: Ehud and the Moabites.*

Read Judg. 3:12-30.

1. "And the children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah: and Jehovah strengthened Eglon the king of Moab" against them, and they "served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years." It appears that the Moabites, having recovered from the losses inflicted upon them before Moses' death (cf. Josh. 24:9, 10), crossed the Jordan, seized Jericho, "The City of Palm Trees," and exacted tribute from the Benjamites.

2. Accordingly, Ehud the Benjamite, as the story runs, was raised up and became the valorous avenger of Israel. Like many of his tribesmen, he was left-handed. Under the pretense of bringing a "secret errand" to the king, Ehud treacherously murdered the king, thrusting his sword with his left hand into Eglon's body.

3. Escaping to the hill country of Ephraim, he blew a trumpet, and bade the people follow him. They did so, and seized the fords of the Jordan, cutting off ten thousand of the Moabites as they attempted to escape. Thus the yoke of Moab was broken, and "the land had rest four-score years."

4. The chronological position of this "oppression," like

that of Cushan-rishathaim, seems to fall near the beginning of the period of the Judges; but the same is probably not true of the invasion of the Philistines, alluded to in Judg. 3:31; for, in Judg. 10:7, it is hinted that the invasion of the Philistines and that of the Ammonites were simultaneous, and it is quite probable that the "forty years" of Philistine domination recorded in Judg. 13:1 include both Shamgar's judgeship and the "twenty years" of Samson's. See Judg. 15:20. Hence, probably Shamgar and Samson and the Philistine domination belong to a later stage of the history of the period, though the Philistines, of course, oppressed Israel, more or less, continuously.

Was Ehud's conduct morally justifiable? Look up Judg. 3:20, and compare 5:24.

*3d Day: Deborah and the Canaanites.*

Read Judg. 4 and 5.

1. Scarcely was one enemy expelled before another began to oppress Israel. This time it was the Canaanites in the north, who renewed their earlier struggle against Joshua and oppressed Israel for twenty years (cf. Josh. 11); for, when Ehud was dead, again the children of Israel did evil, and "Jehovah sold them into the hand of Jabin, king of Canaan . . . , the captain of whose host was Sisera."

2. Deborah, who apparently was the foremost patriot of Ephraim, judged Israel at that time. Like Joan of Arc, the peasant girl of France, who roused her people against the English when princes and statesmen had well-nigh abandoned the cause, Deborah arose "a mother in Israel" and brought deliverance from the foe.

3. But first she summoned Barak of Naphtali to command Israel's forces. Barak consented to go on condition that Deborah would accompany him. The fighting men of seven tribes responded, and Barak, with an army of

ten thousand, took up his position at Mount Tabor. Sisera, with all his forces and nine hundred chariots of iron, approached from the west along the banks of the Kishon. The battle was fought in the great plain of Esdraelon, in Galilee, which has since become one of the most celebrated battlefields of history.

4. At Deborah's command, Barak charged down upon the enemy, and, assisted by a heavy storm, which flooded the plain, threw the Canaanites into confusion, so that they fled in dismay. Sisera, who was forced to flee on foot, escaped to the tent of the Kenite, Jael, who treacherously drove a tent-pin through his temples.

5. This was the crowning victory of the period, and "ranks in sacred history next after the battle of Beth-horon amongst the religious battles of the world" (Stanley). "And the land had rest forty years."

6. The story is related both in prose and poetry, the latter (Judg. 5) being a most perfect specimen of ancient Hebrew poetry. A "tone of fierce triumph rings through the poem" (Ottley).

For a good text on "Leadership," look up Judg. 5:2 in the Revised Version.

*4th Day: Gideon and the Midianites.*

Read Judg. 6—9.

1. The fourth important invasion of Israel's territory was from the east. The Midianites, together with other neighboring desert tribes, crossed the Jordan and afflicted Israel as far as Gaza, leaving no sustenance in the land and forcing the peasant Israelites to take refuge in dens and caves. Their two superior chiefs, or "kings," were Zebah and Zalmunna, and their two inferior chiefs, or "princes," were Oreb and Zeeb.

2. The deliverer raised up in this crisis was Gideon, called also Jerubbaal, of the tribe of Manasseh, who,

though springing from one of the humblest families of his people, became the greatest hero of this period. Gideon was cautious, for, before he consented to undertake the deliverance of his afflicted people, he secured a "sign" from Jehovah that he would succeed. Cf. Judg. 6:15 f.

3. Thereupon he rallied about him his own clansmen of Abiezer and took a position beside the spring of Harod, near Jezreel, the hosts of Midian lying encamped over against him by the hill of Moreh to the north. Having secured a goodly army, he was divinely directed, before proceeding, to dismiss all those who were cowardly or rash. He did so, and his forces were reduced from thirty-two thousand to three hundred.

4. Dividing, now, these three hundred into three bands, he equipped them with trumpets and empty pitchers, which concealed torches, and directed them that at midnight, at a certain signal, they should blow their trumpets, break their pitchers and shout, "The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon!" They obeyed, and suddenly the sleeping Midianites were rushing hither and thither in great consternation, seeking escape.

5. Gideon's success rallied to him the neighboring tribesmen, who vigorously pursued the retreating invaders, intercepted them at the fords of the Jordan, and slaughtered their "princes," Oreb and Zeeb. Their "kings," Zebah and Zalmunna, however, escaped with fifteen thousand men to Karkor, in the desert. But Gideon, with his men, though "faint," continued the pursuit until he overtook and slew them. Succoth and Penuel were afterwards punished for their "taunt." See Judg. 8:6 ff.

6. This signal victory of Gideon, to which prophets and psalmists so often allude (cf. Isa. 9:4; Ps. 83:11), secured for him the offer of kingly authority, which he wisely and absolutely refused. Not so, however, his "bramble" son, Abimelech, who coveted, intrigued and finally obtained the sovereignty, holding the kingship for three brief and stormy years.

Note the significance of Gideon's sage reply to the Ephraimites in Judges 8:2. Show how it may be applied.

*5th Day: Jephthah and the Ammonites.*

Read Judg. 10—12.

1. Two minor judges, Tola and Jair, are mentioned as intervening between Gideon and Jephthah, and the hint is given, in Judg. 10:1, that the former had authority beyond the limits of his own tribe; for it is stated that, while he was a native of Issachar, yet he dwelt in Mount Ephraim.

2. But the Ammonite invasion of Manasseh's territory is the next outstanding crisis in the history. It appears that the Ammonites, having been compelled by Sihon, in Moses' time, to evacuate much of their territory, now determined to recover it. They had oppressed the Israelites of the east side of the Jordan for eight years (cf. Judg. 10:8).

3. Jephthah was the son of a harlot, and had been banished by his brethren to the country of Tob, to the north. There, like a "wild and lawless freebooter," he gathered about him a band of "vain fellows," who probably were accustomed to accompany him on his marauding expeditions. The elders of Gilead, accordingly, invited him to take the field against the Ammonites. He consented on condition that they would make him their chief in case the campaign issued successfully. The elders of Gilead agreed.

4. Jephthah, however, first sent messengers to the King of the Ammonites and remonstrated with him for his wanton invasion of Israel's territory, reminding him that for three hundred years (that is, since the days of Moses) this now disputed territory had been in the possession of the Israelites. Look up particularly Judg. 11:26, as it is the one chronological note in the book of the Judges of

value in estimating the length of the period under consideration, and compare it with 1 Kings 6:1.

5. Anticipating the severity of the fierce struggle before him, Jephthah vowed that, if he should succeed in subduing the Ammonites, he would sacrifice to Jehovah that which first came forth from the door of his house to meet him on his return. Alas! his only daughter fell the unhappy victim of this rash promise. Nevertheless, after two months, during which she bewailed her childlessness, she heroically submitted to her fate.

6. When the men of Ephraim heard of Jephthah's victory over the Ammonites, with characteristic jealousy they coarsely chided him for not having given them a chance to share in the glory which had come to the nation through his victory (cf. Judg. 12:1, and recall 8:1). But Jephthah, with less courtesy than Gideon had manifested, turned upon them, and defeated them in battle, and cut off their escape homeward at the fords of the Jordan, detecting the returning fugitives by their inability to pronounce correctly the word *shibboleth* ("stream"); for on the west side of the Jordan they pronounced it *sibboleth.*

Recall another case of human sacrifice in 2 Kings 3:27. What belief underlay it?

*6th Day: Samson and the Philistines.*

Read Judg. 13—16.

1. Passing over the names of three minor Judges, Ibzan, Elon and Abdon, who seem to have been contemporaries or immediate successors of Jephthah, we are brought to the oppression of Israel by the Philistines—the sixth and last great event recorded in the book of Judges. Now, the Philistines were a strong, well-fed, but half-civilized and uncircumcised people, who had oppressed Israel for forty years. In the original conquest of Canaan by Joshua they are but incidentally mentioned. But now "they

threatened the subjugation of the country at large" (Wade).

2. Samson, of the tribe of Dan, was their first conqueror. He was a Nazarite—the first mentioned in the Old Testament. He neither drank wine nor cut his locks. He was a giant in strength and full of pranks. Around his name gathered a host of traditions, which describe him as a military hero, which doubtless he was.

3. In spite of the protests of his father and mother, he married a Philistine woman. Look up Judg. 14:4 for his motive in doing so. Later he was the cause of her father's house being burnt with fire, which incited the Philistines to invade Judah and bind Samson; but the expedition ended in Samson's smiting a thousand of them with a fresh jawbone of an ass.

4. Visiting Gaza, he went in unto a harlot. Being detected, however, he left the city, carrying off its doors and posts. Through his love for Delilah, the Philistines finally wrested from him the secret of his great strength, and his fall followed; his eyes were put out; he was bound in fetters and made to grind in the prison house. But, regaining his strength, he eventually avenged himself on the Philistines by pulling down the house of Dagon upon a multitude of his enemies, though the deed cost him his own life.

5. "Samson judged Israel twenty years." He was fitful and impetuous, and, accordingly, his deeds of valor made no permanent effect for good upon the country. He manifested courage in regard to men, and weakness in regard to women. The most that can be said of him is, that he was the "Hebrew Hercules," who died "avenged of the Philistines."

In what sense did the "Spirit of Jehovah" come mightily upon him? Compare Judg. 13:25, 14:1, 15:14.

*7th Day: Remarks in Review.*

Glance over Judg. 17—21 and Ruth.

1. As we have seen, during the period of the Judges "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." By a series of sketches the author shows how imperfectly Israel fulfilled their duty in subduing the land. Oppression and subjugation, however, were followed by repentance and deliverance, the agent in each case being some one who was noted for his warlike prowess.

2. Three important appendices belong to the history of these times: (1) Judg. 17 and 18, containing the migration of the Danites to the region of Mount Hermon. (2) Judg. 19-21, relating to the outrage of Gibeah on the Levite's concubine, and the consequent vengeance of the Israelites upon the tribe of Benjamin. (3) The book of Ruth, which is a story of exquisite beauty and simplicity, "a poem which no art can improve upon" (Tennyson).

3. All these sketches are too realistic to be called fabulous or mythical. They are, rather, the true narratives of rough but brave deeds. The charming little story of Ruth gives a beautiful touch to the whole account, making us feel that, notwithstanding the roughness of the times, there were here and there gleams of "idyllic peace and fervent piety" (Robertson).

4. The age was a formative one in the religious education of Israel. "Its heroes, often rude and barbaric in their methods, were rather patriotic warriors than moral reformers; and yet, under God's providence, their work in its ultimate results was more truly religious than they knew, since they helped to shape that nation whose whole history was a preparation for the coming of Christ" (Mackay).

## STUDY X.

### Samuel, the Last of the Judges.

*1st Day: Samuel's Birth and Consecration.*

Read 1 Sam. 1—3.

1. The *period* of the Judges does not end with the *Book* of Judges. Both the high priest Eli and the prophet Samuel were also Judges, and separate the earlier Judges from the Kings. Most particularly, Samuel's career marks the transition from the former period, which was one of confusion and disunion, to one of order and organized unity under a single head.

2. The conquest of Canaan had bred a spirit of discord. The tribes no longer held together. It was one of the stormiest periods in Israel's entire history—"a period which, religiously as well as politically, was one of degeneracy" (Sayce). In such a crisis Samuel became the nation's friend and counselor.

3. Samuel was seer as well as judge; a man of peace, not war. His authority extended far beyond the boundaries of his tribe. By birth he was a Levite, of the hill country of Ephraim. His parents were pious, and lived in Ramah. His mother, having had no child, vowed that if God would give her a son in answer to her silent prayer (the first instance of silent prayer in Scripture) she would dedicate him as a Nazarite to Jehovah (cf. 1 Sam. 1:11 f.).

4. Her petition was granted, and as soon as the child was old enough she gave him over into the custody of Eli, the high priest at Shiloh, to be trained for the service of the sanctuary.

5. When he was "twelve years old," according to Jose-

phus, Jehovah called him to the office of prophet. (Read the fascinating account of his call, as recorded in 1 Sam. 3, and ponder its personal character.) The simple, tender heart of the little boy responded to the divine voice, and the approaching doom of Eli's house was one of the first secrets that God entrusted to him. Not long after, it was discerned by all Israel that "Samuel was established to be a prophet of Jehovah."

Compare Hannah's song of thanksgiving in 1 Sam. 2:1-10 with "The Magnificat" of Mary in Luke 1:46-55.

*2d Day: The Ark of the Covenant Captured.*

Read 1 Sam. 4:1—7:2.

1. Scarcely had Samuel grown to manhood, when the Philistines, who had been previously humiliated by Samson, revived their broken strength, and a fatal battle between them and the Israelites took place at Aphek, in which about four thousand Hebrews were killed. Thrown into a panic by this disaster, the elders of Israel sent and fetched from Shiloh the ark of the covenant, the fancied safeguard of the nation, that, in some magic way, if possible, it might save them out of the hands of their enemies.

2. At that time, Hophni and Phinehas, the two dissolute sons of Eli, were in charge of the sacred chest, and they foolishly consented to its being thus used as a fetish or talisman. When it made its appearance in the camp, all the people shouted with a great shout, and the Philistines were afraid. But, alas! in the engagement which followed, not fewer than thirty thousand of the Israelites fell, including Hophni and Phinehas, and the ark itself was taken.

3. Eli, the high priest, now ninety-eight years old and blind, when he heard of the sad fate of his two sons and of the capture of the ark, suddenly expired; and likewise his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, when she was

informed of the double calamity, died in premature childbirth, naming her new-born son "Ichabod," because "the glory had departed from Israel."

4. Israel's defeat was complete and overwhelming, involving national dishonor. "A single day had deprived Israel of its ark and of its priests" (Sayce). Shiloh also was probably destroyed at the same time. Compare Jer. 7:12, 15. The final judgment on Eli's house, however, was not executed until the time of Solomon, when he deposed Abiathar from the priesthood and substituted Zadok in his room. Look up 1 Kings 2:35.

Trace the movements of the ark as recorded in 1 Sam. 6:1-7:2. What lesson should be learned from the lives of Hophni and Phinehas?

*3d Day: The Reformation of Samuel.*

Read 1 Sam. 7.

1. The loss of the ark and the accompanying fall of Shiloh scattered the priests of the ancient sanctuary. Samuel himself fled to Ramah, and "there, as a seer and prophet, and as one of the few literary men of the age, he became the center of all that was left of patriotism and national feeling in Israel" (Sayce).

2. During the twenty years in which the ark was in quiet seclusion at Kirjath-jearim he seems to have planned and performed a reformation. The need was manifest. Foreign invasion had been followed by internal corruption. The people were thoroughly demoralized. More than anything else, they needed a strong adviser who could carry his own wise counsels into effect.

3. Such a counselor was found in Samuel, who neither founded a new state like Moses, nor championed the existing order of things like Elijah, but, like his predecessors, the Judges, wrought deliverance for his people—the difference between him and them being that his mission was more strictly religious than theirs. See 1 Sam. 7:4.

4. Calling an assembly at Mizpah, he assured the elders of Israel, if they would return to Jehovah with all their heart and put away the foreign gods from among them, that Jehovah would deliver them out of the hands of the Philistines. And before the assembly was dismissed the truth of his words was demonstrated; for the Philistines, hearing that they were assembled at Mizpah, made an attack upon them, but were driven back, defeated, having been thrown into dismay by a timely thunder-storm.

5. So far as is known, this was the only direct military achievement of Samuel's life; and even in this engagement there is no ground for thinking that he wielded a sword himself. Samuel "prayed and offered sacrifices." Still, it was probably this victory that raised him to the office of Judgeship.

What spiritual advantage is possible to the individual who rears stones of help like that mentioned in 1 Sam. 7:12?

*4th Day: The People's Desire for a King.*

Read 1 Sam. 8.

1. The downfall of Shiloh left the nation without a central sanctuary, but its destruction could not prevent the continuance of Israel's customary ritual. Necessity knows no law. Other places were soon chosen. Bethel regained its former renown, and Gilgal and Mizpah also became centers of sacrifice. To these, accordingly, from year to year, Samuel went in solemn circuit and judged Israel. At Ramah he built an altar.

2. Now, when Samuel grew old he associated with him in the Judgeship his two sons, Joel and Abijah, appointing them a post at Beersheba. But they, like the two sons of Eli, proved unworthy of their father's trust, for they took bribes and became notoriously wicked. Indeed, the maladministration of Samuel's two sons furnished the im-

mediate pretext to the people for wishing a king. See 1 Sam. 8:5. "Their instinct was right, however, for in no other way could the Israelitish nation be saved. Democracy had been tried and had failed" (Sayce).

3. But their request for a king naturally displeased Samuel; for, whatever may have been his aspirations for his sons, he clearly saw that they were wishing to place the human king before God. By divine direction, Samuel therefore protested solemnly to the people, showing them the manner of the king which would reign over them; but they persistently replied: "Nay; but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles."

4. Obviously, the old reverence for the theocracy was about gone. "It was an age of materialism. Religion had become a form; its spirit had fled. The nation had lost its faith" (Matheson). In Gideon's day there had been a similar desire for a settled government. Now that desire was too strong to be resisted. Accordingly, Samuel, in noble unselfishness and humility, yielded to the national will and consecrated Saul.

How do you account for the fact that the sons of good men such as Eli and Samuel became so corrupt? What lesson does it teach?

*5th Day: Samuel and the Sons of the Prophets.*

Read 1 Sam. 10:1-13, 19:18-24.

1. About Samuel, at Ramah and elsewhere, there gathered a band of men known as the "Sons of the Prophets," who seem to have resided by themselves in a certain quarter of Ramah called Naioth, or "students' apartments." Look up 1 Sam. 19:18 f.

2. We are accustomed to think of these student communities as "schools," though the word "school" does not

occur in the Old Testament. To them "the word of Jehovah," which was so precious in those days, was revealed; the members of these prophetic "guilds" being instructed presumably in "music, oratory and the historical traditions of their race, besides being grounded in the national faith" (Wade).

3. Such groups were to be found at Samaria, Shiloh, Gilgal, Bethel, Ramah and Jericho, with "Samuel standing as head over them." Compare 1 Sam. 19:20. They lived by means of agriculture and wore a mantle of hair. Whatever may have been their historical origin, whether indigenous to Israel or borrowed from the Canaanites, Samuel recognized them as standing in the prophetic succession.

4. Their spirit of patriotism and general religious enthusiasm was contagious. See 1 Sam. 10:5, 6. They were excitable, yet noble and sincere; of ecstatic temper, but active and practically interested in public affairs. Their singing and dancing resembled the frenzy and prostrations of the modern Mohammedan Dervish, but they themselves were probably more truly under the influence of the Spirit of God than the latter. They were cenobites, not celibates. In short, in these organized religious communities we may perhaps discover the beginnings of the modern college or theological seminary.

Reflect on the wisdom of the following observation of a rabbi: "I have learned much from my masters, more from my companions, most of all from my scholars."

*6th Day: Samuel's Solemn Farewell to Israel.*

Read 1 Sam. 12.

1. When Samuel became old, he publicly appealed to all Israel to witness to the rectitude of his life from his childhood on. He says: "Here I am: witness against me

before Jehovah, and before His anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I taken a ransom to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you."

2. And all the people responded: "Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand . . . Jehovah is witness."

3. "Only a Samuel could thus quit office, proudly challenging all to convict him of one single injustice in his past career, and by the act of resignation gaining, not losing, greatness. No longer judge and ruler, but simple prophet, he is able now to discourse with greater freedom of the monarchy about to be introduced, and he seizes the moment to cast a more distant glance into all the past and future of the community" (Ewald).

4. It is this appeal and the universal response of the people that has caused Grotius to give him, as Stanley reminds us, the name of "the Jewish Aristides." He rehearses the story of Israel, and shows, in asking for an earthly king, how ungrateful the people are to the heavenly King. And he confirms his word by a sign, a thunder-storm, sent in answer to his prayer, in the unusual season of wheat harvest.

5. Upon this, the elders acknowledge their wilfulness in demanding a king and beg Samuel to continue to pray for them. This he most cheerfully promises to do, urging them, in conclusion, to be loyal to God under the new government.

6. This address contains a summary of the proceedings of the Gilgal Assembly, and by its truly prophetic spirit places Samuel on the highest possible moral plane.

Are we warranted in supposing that Samuel was a man of prayer habitually? See 1 Sam. 12:17, 15:11, and compare Ps. 99:6.

*7th Day: Samuel's Death—Review.*

1. "And Samuel died; and all Israel gathered themselves together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah." Compare 1 Sam. 25:1. While he lived he was virtually an uncrowned king; when he died his loss was mourned as irreparable by the entire nation.

2. Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. See 1 Sam. 7:15. Even after the monarchy had become established he was still the influential factor in the government—"a witness of an earlier and more primitive state" (Stanley).

3. Had his sons been worthy, they might have succeeded their father in influence and authority; but their moral character made this impossible. In any case, a new form of government was demanded. "It is a striking characteristic of Jewish history that the transition from a pure theocracy to monarchy took place without usurpation or violence, by the free action of all interested in the change" (Geikie).

4. To Samuel is due this peaceful transition. His sphere was not that of a warrior, but rather that of a spokesman for God. Before him Israel's leaders had been military heroes; but now the time had come when the people needed to be more compactly cemented into a nation and be given a recognized commander-in-chief. Saul was chosen to be the leader in war, and Samuel continued the executive ruler in religion and government.

5. The moral greatness of Samuel's character is seen in all his deeds, but especially in his noble unselfishness and humility, in his devotion to the highest interests of his people, and in his loyalty to Jehovah. "He found his people in the deepest national degradation, politically and religiously, and left them on the eve of the most splendid era in their history" (Geikie).

Why is 1 Sam. 15:22 justly considered Samuel's greatest utterance?

## STUDY XI.

### Saul, "the First King of God's Kingdom."

*1st Day: Samuel's Choice of Saul.*

Read 1 Sam. 9:1—10:16.

1. In the history of God's Chosen People, the time came when it seemed desirable if not imperative that they should have one permanent executive head. Local deliverers, such as the Judges, no longer sufficed; for the relief which they afforded was only temporary. They had been raised up to meet special emergencies, and when they died, not having any successors, the nation was left without a visible head.

2. Saul, the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, became the first king of united Israel. In him a marked advance was made in the nation's history. "He saved Israel from destruction, and for a time succeeded in rolling back the wave of Philistine domination" (Sayce).

3. How he came into power is involved in considerable obscurity. The narrative contained in 1 Samuel gives, to some, the impression that two distinct and contradictory traditions of Saul's elevation to the kingly office have been preserved, namely: 9:1—10:16 and 10:17-27. But the apparent inconsistency may be explained as follows: in 9:1—10:16 the external facts, such as Saul's seeking his father's asses and Samuel's part in his consecration, are described, whereas in 10:17-27 the narrator enters more into the state of the people's mind in asking for a king, and represents Samuel as at first opposed to the request.

4. Or again, in the former, Saul is anointed privately in obedience to the divine command, to deliver Israel out

of the hands of the Philistines; whereas, in the latter, he is chosen by lot at a formal meeting of the people at Mizpah, and the choice is ratified by popular election.

5. As the narrative now stands, therefore, it contains not so much divergent or contradictory traditions, as a vivid description of the processes by which the kingdom was created, and the mixed motives which animated the people in seeking a king.

According to "the law of the kingdom" in Deut. 17:14-20, what requirements were made of a Hebrew sovereign?

*2d Day: The People's Choice of Saul.*

Read 1 Sam. 10:17-27.

1. Belonging to the neutral tribe of Benjamin, Saul might reasonably be expected to succeed better than any other in uniting the rival factions of the north and south. He also possessed a commanding figure, which, in his age, was the first requisite for leadership. His tallness of stature was probably considered the outward token of superiority which Jehovah had set upon him. Agamemnon, too, was head and shoulders taller than all the people (Homer).

2. Saul was chosen at Mizpah, but crowned at Gilgal. Meanwhile the war with Ammon took place. Look up 1 Sam. 11:14, 15. The "lot" which was cast at Mizpah was regarded by Samuel as the choice of Jehovah himself. For proof, see 1 Sam. 10:24.

3. The national gathering at Mizpah would have doubtless sufficed to create the kingly office, and seat Saul upon the throne, had there not been a considerable minority who opposed him "and brought him no present." But popular sentiment turned so decidedly in his favor after his victory over the Ammonites that Samuel deemed it expedient to call a second assembly at Gilgal, "to renew the kingdom." "There they made Saul king, and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly." And so at last, the new king

stood recognized by all, being solemnly acclaimed head of the nation.

4. As the first king of Israel, Saul's position naturally was one of supreme difficulty; while nominally chief magistrate, theocratically he was held in subordination to Samuel, the prophetic representative of Jehovah. Such a position was, therefore, totally unlike that of the kings of surrounding nations. It was an experiment, and as such could scarcely be expected to succeed.

5. The choice of Saul, however, was not unfortunate. For, while the people looked more upon his outward appearance than upon his heart, his selection was really due to the keen penetration of a seer whose acquiescence in the matter was based upon the distinct will of God. Even the army seems to have been consulted. Look up 1 Sam. 10:26. Probably no one else in all the nation was better fitted at that time to stand at the head of public affairs.

What may we learn from Saul as to the best manner in which to treat an opposing minority? See 1 Sam. 10:27.

*3d Day: Saul's First Great Victory.*

Read 1 Sam. 11.

1. After the "lot" had fallen upon Saul at Mizpah, he seems to have retired quietly to his father's farm. There, weeping messengers from Jabesh-gilead found him "following the oxen out of the field." When he learned the cause of their lamentation, "the Spirit of God came mightily upon him," and without hesitation he cut up a yoke of oxen and "sent these bloody reminders of duty throughout Israel with the threat that the oxen of those who did not respond would meet a similar fate" (Kent). The people responded to his summons "as one man"—330,000 strong.

2. He divided his forces into three companies, fell upon the Ammonites in the morning watch, smote them until the heat of the day, and scattered them so that no two of

them were left together. "The victory at once rendered Saul so popular that a clamor was raised for the punishment of those who had refused allegiance; but Saul magnanimously declined to mar his triumph by an act of revenge" (Wade). See 1 Sam. 11:12, 13. Indeed, through the victory which he won over Nahash, the Ammonite, he demonstrated to the "worthless fellows," who had despised him, that he was fully able to wage Israel's battles successfully. The work which Jephthah had wrought in that wild region had been done over again. Compare Judg. 11:33.

3. This was Saul's first great victory. Jabesh-gilead was rescued, and his opponents silenced. But it is difficult to realize that we are quite passed out of the former period. Saul seems still to be virtually king only within his own tribe. For nothing has yet been done towards releasing the nation from the domination of the Philistines.

To what extent do 1 Sam. 11:6 and 13 throw light upon the depth of Saul's character?

*4th Day: Jonathan's Victory over the Philistines.*

Read 1 Sam. 13 and 14.

1. "In accepting the kingship, Saul entered upon a heritage of war. His title was an empty one until he had won a kingdom" (Kent). The Philistines were his life-long foes; their defeat his life-long task. Saul's first engagement with them seems to have taken place in the early portion of his reign.

2. The order of events was as follows: Saul and his son, Jonathan (who is now mentioned for the first time), with 3,000 men took up a position in the vicinity of Michmash. Jonathan ventured to assail the Philistine outpost at Gibeah. The fortress was taken. This act the Philistines interpreted as an open revolt against their supremacy. They accepted the challenge, mastered an army of 30,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen and numberless

fighting men, and encamped near Michmash. The Hebrews, hearing of the Philistine invasion of their territory, "hid themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in coverts, and in pits;" some even fled across the Jordan into Gilead. Saul succeeded, however, in gathering together at Gilgal a company of 600 men; but even they had no proper implements of war, and consequently followed Saul "trembling."

3. Going up to Gibeah, Saul reinforced the fortress at that place, the hosts of the Philistines being encamped just across the deep ravine which separated Gibeah from Michmash. The outlook was discouraging. But the adventurous spirit of Jonathan led him, accompanied by his armor-bearer, to cross the gorge, climb up the opposite cliff, and make an attack. This was possible, as the Philistines regarded them with utter contempt, supposing they were two hungry refugees who were coming out of their hiding places. But a little later, when twenty of their number lay dead before their eyes, the Philistines became terror-stricken and began to flee. An earthquake added to their dismay.

4. Saul and his men, observing what had happened, joined Jonathan and his armor-bearer in the pursuit. The victory was a signal one, but was not all that it might have been, because Saul, with his characteristic impetuosity, rashly imprecated the curse of death upon whomsoever should touch food until the cessation of the battle. Jonathan, the hero of the day, barely escaped execution at the hands of his father, through the intervention of the people.

Was not Saul justified in offering sacrifice at Gilgal in view of all the circumstances? See 1 Sam. 13:11, 12.

*5th Day: "Saul's Reprobation."*

Read 1 Sam. 15.

1. Saul's wilful disobedience in sparing Agag, the king

of the Amalekites, and the sheep and oxen for sacrifice, caused schism between himself and Samuel. See 1 Sam. 15:35. And because of his repeated acts of disobedience Jehovah rejected him from being king over Israel. At a later period in a fit of jealousy he broke with the priesthood also, ordering the execution of all the sacerdotal order at Nob. Look up 1 Sam. 22:17-19.

2. In the celebrated sermon of the late Dr. A. B. Davidson, entitled "Saul's Reprobation," which is based upon 1 Sam. 15, he gives an analysis of the secret of Saul's downfall. He says: "When Saul came to meet Samuel after the capture of Agag, and said he had done the will of the Lord, he was expressing his honest belief. He was not a vulgar hypocrite. He believed what he said. But he did not know what obedience meant. His great fault was religious incapacity. He had not the faculty of knowing what religion meant. He knew that Jehovah demanded obedience, but he could not penetrate so deep as to know how absolute it must be. He took a general compliance to be obedience. He wanted religious depth.

3. "Again, this religious incapacity of Saul goes some way to explain his madness. He was disappointed. He knew he was unsuccessful. He felt he was unable. Samuel haunted him. He became perplexed. Like a man struggling with a task beyond him, conscious of his incapacity, yet resenting it, mad against circumstances and men and Providence, he burned out like a volcano—a pathetic spectacle of human misery." "There is no more terrible spiritual torment than the consciousness of one's own insufficiency" (Cornill).

4. Saul wanted the one quality necessary for success and happiness, namely, the conception of what God's kingdom was and demanded. He began well. He had the Spirit of God, i. e., the spirit of patriotic enthusiasm. He was changed into another man; but there was not a change deep enough to fit him for his high office.

In the light of Saul's reprobation, what must have been the significance of the popular proverb at his expense, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" (1 Sam. 10:11).

*6th Day: Saul's Jealousy of David.*

Glance through 1 Sam. 18—26.

1. In his foreign wars, Saul won distinction both for himself and his country. A general summary of his triumphs recorded in 1 Sam. 14:47 ascribes to him victories over Ammon, Moab and Edom in the East and Southeast, over the Philistines and Amalekites in the South, and over the kings of Zobah in the distant North beyond Damascus.

2. But at home, the course of events was less happy for him. It has already been related how he broke with Samuel and the priesthood. The manner in which he enviously eyed David is even more pathetic. Of course, his madness had shown itself long before David became his rival or was even known to him. See 1 Sam. 16:14-23.

3. But David's sudden leap into popularity after killing the giant Goliath excited more seriously the king's jealousy. The women used to sing antiphonally one to another as they played:

"Saul hath slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands."

"The king brooded over the words, until in his moments of insanity they overpowered all prudence and restraint. When he recovered, they still sounded in his ears and his feigned friendship towards his son-in-law concealed murder in his heart" (Sayce).

4. Jonathan, the unselfish, "generous" son of the king, though he never forgot his filial relation to his father, became growingly fond of David. Even Saul in his better moments never lost his strong affection for David. Michal, Saul's daughter, had married him. The friend-

ship between David and Jonathan is of the purest type in all literature.

5. Fresh honors, however, more and more excited the king's rage. He even attempted on several occasions to murder David with his own hand. Again and again Saul pursued him, and again and again David escaped out of his grasp. On two occasions Saul's life was at the mercy of David, but the latter magnanimously refrained from putting forth his hand against the Lord's anointed.

In David's lamentation, or "dirge," over Saul and Jonathan in 2 Sam. 1:17-27, note David's spirit of forgiveness.

*7th Day: Saul and the Witch of Endor—Résumé.*

Read 1 Sam. 28—31.

1. Saul's career ended in tragedy. The Philistines once more broke into the Israelite territory and occupied the eastern end of the Plain of Esdraelon. The Israelites with Saul as their leader took up a position in the region of Mount Gilboa.

2. Some time before, Saul, in a fit of religious enthusiasm, had put away all those that had familiar spirits out of the land. Yet, on the night before his fatal conflict, he yielded to the superstitious side of his character, and secretly circumvented the Philistine encampment, in order to consult a witch in Endor. The story is a sad one. Saul was discouraged. "In his last extremity he sought Samuel, the friend of his early rule. His mind was coming back to old times. But, alas! it was in vain. Let us not censure, but rather pity him. Subsequent Scripture has no word of censure for Saul" (Davidson).

3. "When he returned to the battlefield, it was to what he regarded as a hopeless fight against fate. His courage, however, stands out all the clearer with this dark background" (Kent). The details of the battle are not related; only the fact that on the heights of Mount Gilboa,

with his three sons and his armor-bearer lying dead beside him, having himself received a deadly wound, he leaned heavily upon his huge spear, and the darkness of death covered him. The newly created monarchy had fallen.

4. It is difficult to estimate the character and work of Saul. In the opinion of Cornill "he finally accomplished nothing, the situation at his death being just what it had been at his coronation, and the fall of his power being a blessing for Israel." It is the general opinion, however, that Saul's career was not altogether a failure; that in particular he developed, out of the cowards of Israel, who at the beginning of his reign fled before the Philistine army and hid themselves in caves and cisterns, the hardy and brave soldiers with whom David made his conquests. Above all, he helped to unify the people and compact them into a nation. "David reaped the fruits of Saul's sowing, but the harvest would never have been so glorious without the pioneer's toils" (Kent). "God's first experiment is one on the field of nature; when this fails, He substitutes for it one on the field of grace" (Davidson).

Contrast Saul, the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, with that other Benjamite, Saul of Tarsus.

## STUDY XII.

### David, the Prospective King of Israel (1 Sam. 16—31).

*1st Day: David, the Shepherd Boy of Bethlehem.*

Read 1 Sam. 16.

1. When the final rupture occurred between Saul and Samuel, the latter "mourned for Saul." "And Jehovah said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from being king over Israel? fill thy horn with oil, and go: I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite; for I have provided me a king among his sons." Thus Samuel, at an early stage in Saul's career, as it seems, transferred his hopes from Saul and bestowed them on David.

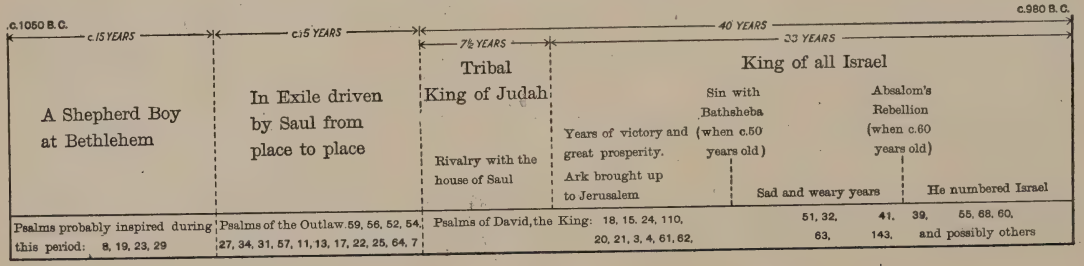
2. "If, then, we seek to estimate the kingship in its religious meaning, the reign of David furnishes the most important point of departure. David was a man after God's heart!" (Davidson). "After Moses, he is the greatest personage of ancient Israel" (Cornill).

3. Concerning the details of his life, we know more than of any other Old Testament character. He appears under a great variety of circumstances,—as shepherd, musician, soldier, king, and poet. To the prophets he became the nation's ideal. See Micah 5:2 ff.; Jer. 33:15. For the three distinct periods of his history, consult the accompanying diagram.

4. He was bright-eyed, ruddy, courageous, swift of foot, and contemplative. Yet foreign blood flowed in his veins. Look up his genealogy in Ruth 4:18-22 and compare Matt. 1:5.

5. Samuel's choice of him doubtless had a most inspirit-

## THE LIFE OF DAVID


c.1050 B.C.
c.980 B.C.
c.15 YEARS
c.15 YEARS
40 YEARS
7½ YEARS
33 YEARS
A Shepherd Boy at Bethlehem
In Exile driven by Saul from place to place
Tribal King of Judah
King of all Israel
Rivalry with the house of Saul
Years of victory and great prosperity.
Ark brought up to Jerusalem
Sin with Bathsheba (when c.50 years old)
Absalom's Rebellion (when c.60 years old)
Sad and weary years
He numbered Israel
Psalms probably inspired during this period: 8, 19, 23, 29
Psalms of the Outlaw 59, 56, 52, 54, 27, 34, 31, 57, 11, 13, 17, 22, 25, 64, 7
Psalms of David, the King: 18, 15, 24, 110, 20, 21, 3, 4, 61, 62,
51, 32, 63,
41, 143,
39, 55, 68, 60, and possibly others

ing influence upon his subsequent life. But his consecration by Samuel did not require him to abandon at once his present vocation. "Saul still reigned, notwithstanding the mystic power, conferred by the consecration, had passed to another" (Sayce).

6. Now, Saul was given to melancholy. At the suggestion of his servants, David was invited to visit the palace to soothe with music his troubled spirit. This was their first meeting. For a while all went well. Saul loved David and made him his armor-bearer, or personal adjutant. According to Seneca, Pythagoras quieted the troubles of his mind with a harp. Elisha, too, once called for a minstrel (2 Kings 3:15). But music can only temporarily alleviate spiritual malady. "Vain are all merely worldly prescriptions for the sin-burdened soul" (Taylor).

Cannot the apparent moral obliquity contained in 1 Sam. 16:2, 3 be satisfactorily explained, by supposing with Davidson that "the historian's object is to show how *God* guided the history, not to tell how men's minds moved or coöperated"?

*2d Day: David's Conflict with Goliath.*

Read 1 Sam. 17.

1. David's first visit to the court of Saul was only temporary. It is explicitly stated in 1 Sam. 17:15 that he "went to and fro from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem." During the indefinitely long period between his first visit to the court of Saul and his defeat of the Philistine champion, he probably passed out of youth into early manhood. If so, this would account, in part at least, for Saul's non-recognition of him after he had killed Goliath, which is one of the critical difficulties of the record. See 1 Sam. 17:55-58.

2. "How far that shepherd life actually produced any of the existing Psalms ascribed to him may be questioned. But it can hardly be doubted that it suggested some of

their most peculiar imagery" (Stanley). Four of the most beautiful of the Psalter's nature poems are conceded by many to have been inspired during this period, namely, Psalms 8, 19, 23, and 29, the last of which is a "storm-piece" of exquisite beauty.

3. David's victory over Goliath was the turning point of his career. On the one side was a huge monster of "impregnable panoply," and on the other, an agile youth armed with a shepherd's staff, a sling and five smooth stones, but full of the spirit of faith in God. In the encounter, the youth stunned the boaster, stood over his insensible antagonist, decapitated him and returned bringing with him as trophies the giant's head and sword. The result was that the terror which had paralyzed the Israelites now passed over to the enemy; henceforth the Philistines regarded David as "the king of the land." See 1 Sam. 21:11.

Ponder the secret of David's success as described in 1 Sam. 17:45.

*3d Day: Open Schism between David and Saul.*

Glance through 1 Sam. 18—21.

1. David's heroic victory over the champion of Gath brought him unprecedented glory; so much, indeed, that Saul's jealousy soon developed into hate. Still, being in honor bound by his promise to reward the vanquisher of the Philistine giant, the king brought David to his court, made him general over a thousand, and gave him, on conditions difficult to fulfill (look up 1 Sam. 18:25), his daughter Michal to wife, whom he maliciously hoped to make a snare to him.

2. By rapid steps Saul drove David into involuntary exile. Neither the unselfish love of Jonathan nor the loyalty of Michal, who by means of a household image deceived the ruffians that surrounded her house, and enabled her husband to escape successfully, was sufficient to allay

the feelings of discouragement which at times overwhelmed David's spirit. He knew that Saul had avowed his purpose to slay him.

3. First, and naturally, David fled to Samuel at Ramah, taking refuge in the sacred enclosure of the Naioth, or monastery. Look up 1 Sam. 19:18. From Ramah he was impelled to betake himself to Ahimelech at Nob. But neither Samuel, the prophet, nor Ahimelech, the priest, was able to furnish him assured protection. Samuel was doubtless suspected by Saul of plotting against the throne, while Ahimelech was probably afraid of Saul.

4. Even Jonathan was powerless to shield him; for, as Cornill suggests, "Saul probably suspected that David had entered with Jonathan into a conspiracy against him to depose him and put Jonathan in his place." But one course remained open, namely, to put himself outside the reach of Saul's pursuers.

5. He therefore fled to Achish, king of Gath, hazardously throwing himself upon the mercy of his enemies, the Philistines. There, at least, Saul could not pursue him.

In connection with 1 Sam. 19:11 read Psalm 59.

*4th Day: David, the Exile.*

Read 1 Sam. 22.

1. To Matheson, David is a personification of his nation, in that the history of Israel seems to reflect itself in his biography. For example, David was an insignificant boy; so were the beginnings of Israel. He was called; so was the father of the Hebrew nation. He was forced to flee his country; so the patriarchs were driven by famine into Egypt. And so on. The parallels are indeed striking.

2. David's resort to Achish of Gath was short-sighted, being due to a lack of faith. He soon found that he was unwelcome among his enemies. Accordingly, he betook himself to the Cave of Adullam—a large cavern not

far southwest of Bethlehem. Thither resorted his relatives, through fear of Saul, and 400 desperate men whom poverty and misery drove to flight. "In the vast columnar halls and arched chambers of this subterranean palace, all who had any grudge against the existing system gathered round the hero of the coming age; these were the unconscious materials out of which a new world was to be formed" (Stanley). Two in particular must be mentioned as having joined themselves to David at this time; Gad, the seer, and Abiathar, the priest.

3. It is noteworthy that in the desultory warfare which for several years went on between the king and David, the latter never employed any weapon but flight; David chose to flee his country rather than raise his hand against the king. What the effect of such a life was upon his spiritual nature is obvious from the story of his subsequent career, and the psalms of deliverance which are ascribed to him. "It deepened his unconditional dependence on God. By the alternations of heat and cold, fear and hope, danger and safety, it tempered his soul and made it flexible, tough and bright as steel. It evolved the qualities of a leader of men: teaching him command and forbearance, promptitude and patience, valor and gentleness. And it gathered round him a force of men devoted to him by the enthusiastic attachment bred from long years of common danger and hardship" (Maclaren).

Read in connection with 1 Sam. 22, Psalms 34 and 27.

*5th Day: David Pursued by Saul.*

Review 1 Sam. 22—24.

1. For the sake of their greater security, David abandoned the Cave of Adullam, in order to remove his aged parents from Bethlehem to Mizpeh in Moab. Recall his genealogical descent from Ruth the Moabitess (Ruth 4:18-22).

2. At the advice of the prophet Gad, he repaired to the

forest of Hereth, located somewhere to the south of Hebron. There he hid until the Philistines made an attack upon Keilah, a town in southwestern Judah. By divine direction, David and his men, whose number had now increased from 400 to 600, went down and delivered Keilah out of the Philistines' hands.

3. It seems to have been the greater part of his business at that time to defend the lives and property of his fellow countrymen from unscrupulous robbers. David took possession of Keilah, and would have abode there indefinitely had not Saul speedily despatched an army to besiege the fortress and entrap him. But before Saul's forces reached Keilah, David had consulted the ephod of Abiathar, the priest, and had been divinely warned not to entrust himself to the inhabitants of the city, but to flee. He did so, his 600 men scattering in various directions. Look up 1 Sam. 23:13.

4. David next repaired to the wilderness of Ziph, southeast of Hebron. There he received a farewell visit from his friend Jonathan. They parted in covenant love. For one of the noblest and most unselfish utterances ever made by human lips, see 1 Sam. 23:17.

5. When the Ziphites treacherously offered to betray David into Saul's hands, he escaped to the wilderness of Maon, a little farther to the southeast. Saul persisted in his pursuit, however, and had almost succeeded in effecting his capture, when a messenger brought the king the timely news that the Philistines were making another invasion of his territory, and he and his men were thrown into a panic.

6. David thereupon betook himself to the fastness of Engedi on the western shore of the Dead Sea. Saul renewed his search for him, assisted by 3,000 men. The pursuer and the pursued on this occasion caught sight of each other. David came near enough to Saul to cut off the skirt of his robe. Before they parted, however, Saul confessed his sin and besought of David, when he succeeded

to the throne, not to destroy his house. "A man is immortal till his work is done."

Read Psalms 7 and 57 in the light of 1 Sam. 24.

*6th Day: David and Nabal.*

Read 1 Sam. 25.

1. Samuel died about this time, and the house of Ramah became extinct. He was especially missed, as no successor arose to admonish the self-willed king.

2. At Engedi, Saul had expressed sorrow for having rewarded David evil for good. Nevertheless, David was justifiably reluctant about trusting himself to one so mercurial and spasmodic as Saul. He, accordingly, arose and went down into the wilderness of Paran, south of Judah.

3. Henceforth, David no longer appears as a solitary fugitive, but as "a powerful freebooter." He and his 600 followers constituted themselves a kind of bodyguard, and voluntarily protected the flocks of many a herdsman from the predatory Bedouins. Nabal, a wealthy sheep-master of the clan of Caleb, who lived near Carmel in southern Judah, was one of those who were greatly indebted to David. Look up 1 Sam. 25:21.

4. The annual sheep-shearing season came. David, "conscious of the services which he and his followers had rendered the sheep-farmer, and expecting that in the day of his gladness his heart would be opened to give a substantial reward to his benefactors, sent ten of his young men to him with a kindly greeting and a polite request that he would give them some supplies."

5. But Nabal was a man of niggardly disposition and selfish character. He lived for himself and his own enjoyment. "His wealth had not endowed him with common sense" (Taylor). David's messengers, therefore, were met with a gruff refusal; and, of course, they reported this answer to their master. Whereupon, David determined to take vengeance upon "the rich fool"—a purpose

morally unjustifiable, but in keeping with the customs of the Orient.

6. Meanwhile, Abigail, Nabal's prudent wife, hearing what was about to occur, prepared a present and went to meet David with due apology. Her act was timely; for David was already on his way to exterminate Nabal's entire household. Abigail threw herself at his feet, and presented her petition so effectively that David's conscience was touched, and he retracted his vow. Ten days later, Nabal died; David married the beautiful widow, and the wealth of Nabal passed into his hands.

What does 1 Sam. 25:24-31 teach about the moral right to take vengeance?

*7th Day: David's Last Interview with Saul.*

Glance through 1 Sam. 26—29.

1. The Ziphites seem to have betrayed David a second time; for Saul, with 3,000 men and Abner, the captain of his host, made a final attempt to capture his imagined enemy. Weary, the king and his men lay down to rest within a barricade of wagons in the midst of the camp. Whilst they slept, David, with his nephew Abishai, stole the king's spear and a cruse of water; and might have taken the king's life, but he would not.

2. Going over to the top of a high mountain, across the valley, David taunted Abner for not having defended the king more faithfully; and as he spoke, Saul recognized David, and said, "Is this thy voice, my son David? Return, for I will no more do thee harm." But David went his way, and Saul returned to his place. This was their final interview.

3. David's exile life was drawing near to an end. And well it was, for he was evidently becoming weary of the life of an outlaw. In desperation, he again threw himself upon the mercy of his hereditary enemy, Achish, the king of Gath. But, "by going over to the Philistines, he in-

volved himself in a long course of cruelty and deceit." He was welcomed as the disaffected champion of the Hebrews, and as the enemy of King Saul. To secure his friendship, Achish gave him Ziklag, a city on the southwest borders of Judah, which was perhaps uninhabited at that time. David accepted of it, and dwelt there with his two wives sixteen months.

4. During this period, according to the Chronicler, David was reinforced by many mighty men of Israel who came over to his side. See 1 Chron. 12. But what is more noteworthy, during this same period David succeeded in making Achish believe that in the forays which he made from time to time he was fighting against the enemies of the Philistines, whereas he was paving the way for his own rule by exterminating the foes of Israel. In all this David was guilty of much clever cunning. Look up 1 Sam. 27:8-12.

5. Nevertheless, Achish continued to trust him blindly; and when he prepared himself for that final assault upon Saul, which culminated at Gilboa, he invited David to accompany him. But the lords of the Philistines did not share their king's credulity. They protested against David as an ally, and forced him to return. "And David probably never thanked his God more ardently than when he was sent home" (Cornill).

Of what religious value to David were these long years of exile life?

## STUDY XIII.

### David, the Tribal King of Judah (2 Sam. 1—5).

*1st Day: David's Lament over Saul.*

Read 2 Sam. 1.

1. The story of Gilboa has been rehearsed. Saul, having lost his confidence in himself and in his God, discouraged and hopeless, leaned heavily upon his spear and died. David was one of his sincerest mourners. The noble elegy contained in 2 Sam. 1:19-27, which has been extracted by the sacred historian from the ancient *Book of Jashar,* is an immortal witness to his personal grief. The poem is known as the "Song of the Bow," and is considered one of the gems of Hebrew poetry.

2. It may have been originally designed as a memorial to Jonathan, as he was an archer who was particularly fond of the bow. But it unveils so perfectly the magnanimous spirit of "the Exile" toward his pursuer, that it may fittingly be called a lamentation over King Saul:

> "Saul and Jonathan were lovely
> And pleasant in their lives,
> And in their death they were not divided:
> They were swifter than eagles,
> They were stronger than lions.
> * * * * * * *
> How are the mighty fallen,
> And the weapons of war perished!"

3. David thus found an outlet to his feelings in this truly Christ-like poem, which is "animated not merely by a poet's heart for the virtues of a great man, but by the

spirit of personal forgiveness for very cruel wrongs." It is the dirge of a man of God "over his dead enemy and his dead friend, and is one of the most beautiful anticipations to be found in the Old Testament of Christ's command to love one's enemies" (Smith).

4. The lyric grandeur of this beautiful poem has been expressed by Handel in music, in the famous Dead March in "Saul"; it is frequently used when great men are carried to their sepulchres.

Before taking final leave of 1 Samuel, note and locate the following precious texts: 2:30; 15:22; 25:29.

*2d Day: David Anointed King over Judah.*

Read 2 Sam. 2:1-4.

1. Fortunately, for more reasons than one, David was not allowed to fight with the Philistines against Saul. Having been dismissed by Achish, because he was an objectionable mercenary to the Philistine lords, he returned to Ziklag, only to find that it had been looted and burned by a band of marauding Amalekites, and that his two wives had been taken captive.

2. David lost no time in pursuing the offenders. When he succeeded in overtaking them, and had recovered his wives and property, with characteristic foresight he sent portions of the spoil to the elders of Judah who had befriended him in the days of his exile. See 1 Sam. 30. "But the pretext was more than transparent. A crown was already within measurable distance of the Jewish chieftain; all that was needed was the goodwill of the elders" (Sayce).

3. David's reign falls into two unequal portions: "seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem." See 1 Kings 2:11. Saul and Jonathan were dead; he had been assured by Jehovah of his right to the throne. With confidence, therefore, David marched to Hebron, accompanied by his "armed veterans

and devoted adherents," and there offered himself to the Jewish elders as king of Judah.

4. Tribal feeling was still sufficiently powerful to lead Judah to act independently of the rest of the nation. Without opposition, and probably with the promise of Philistine protection, David was anointed king over the tribe of Judah at Hebron, a city which, on account of its holy associations and central location, was best adapted, temporarily at least, to become David's capital. Thus the son of Jesse was permitted to reap the fruit of his "judicious courtesies and prudent marriage alliances."

Is David to be commended or condemned for having predisposed in his favor the elders of Judah through his presents of spoil taken from the Amalekites? Compare Luke 16:9.

*3d Day: Ishbosheth Made King over Gilead.*

Read 2 Sam. 2:5-32.

1. David's first public act after his coronation was to send an embassy to the men of Jabesh-gilead, to commend them for their nobility in caring for the bodies of Saul and his three sons. But at the same time, he took care to communicate to them the news that the elders of Judah had made him king. The men of Jabesh, however, made no response. See 2 Sam. 2:5-7.

2. Meanwhile, upon the death of Saul, Abner, Saul's cousin and commander-in-chief, had taken Ishbosheth (or Eshbaal, as in 1 Chron. 8:33), the youngest son of Saul, and proclaimed him king at Mahanaim, east of the Jordan. "There out of the ruins of Saul's dominions he hoped to establish a kingdom: Ishbosheth also probably being under Philistine suzerainty" (Cornill).

3. Ishbosheth, however, was never more than a mere shadow of a king. "Whether he was a minor or an imbecile it is impossible to say with certainty: most probably he was but a child" (Sayce). On the other hand, com-

pare 2 Sam. 2:10. Ishbosheth ruled two years at Mahanaim; but Abner was the real king.

4. He drove the Philistines out of Ashur (or Geshur), from Jezreel, and Ephraim, and Benjamin, and from all Israel. See 2 Sam. 2:8, 9. But when he attempted to subject Judah also, war ensued. The contest at first took the form of a duel, which was fought at Gibeon between two companies of twelve men each. But later, a fierce battle was fought, in which Abner and his men were put to flight by Joab, David's nephew, who now appears in the record for the first time. Joab lost twenty men in the battle; Abner, three hundred and sixty.

5. Joab's brother, Asahel, being swift of foot, sought to win glory for himself by pursuing Abner in his retreat. The aged warrior warned him to turn back, and when he refused, Abner slew him in self-defense. Precious blood was thus spilt, which cried for vengeance, and before long vengeance was obtained.

*Note:* The student should ever endeavor to trace God's hand in the checkered course of Israel's fortunes; for the history recorded in the Old Testament is *religious* history having a moral purpose.

### *4th Day: Abner's Treason and Death.*

Read 2 Sam. 3.

1. When Abner saw that, in the contest between the house of David and the house of Saul, he was on the losing side, he forsook Ishbosheth and came over to the side of David. The pretext arose out of his marriage with Rizpah, Saul's concubine; an act which Ishbosheth naturally interpreted, in keeping with Eastern views, as equivalent to claiming the throne.

2. In a fit of temper, he rebuked Abner for marrying the wife of his dead father; whereupon Abner became indignant, and openly declared his purpose to desert him and go over to the side of David. "He had probably

recognized for some time that there was no prospect under existing circumstances that Ishbosheth's reign could last long" (Cornill).

3. Abner immediately despatched messengers to David, offering him his sword, and giving assurances that he could bring with him all Israel from Dan to Beersheba. David, however, did not permit himself to manifest undue eagerness in the matter; but stipulated, in order probably to test his loyalty, that Abner should fetch in particular Michal, David's former wife, whom Saul had wrenched from him. For David saw that, when recognized "as the acknowledged son-in-law of Saul, he would again stand before the Israelites as the rightful heir of their former king" (Kent). Abner complied with the king's command, and tore Michal from her sorrowing husband. Meanwhile, David, like an Oriental despot, had added four other new wives to his harem from the neighboring principalities. See 2 Sam. 3:2-5.

4. When, however, Joab heard of what David and Abner had done, he was bitterly offended, and sharply rebuked the king for his simplicity in extending a welcome to the cunning diplomatist. And because Abner had slain his brother Asahel, Joab treacherously sent for Abner, took him aside, and slew him in cold blood. No act, of course, could have been more calculated to defeat David's desire to secure the friendship of Abner's constituency; and had not the king severely rebuked Joab, and put on sackcloth, and proclaimed a public mourning for Abner, he would probably have failed utterly in winning the loyalty of the northern tribes.

Granted that Joab was "dominated with a feeling of absolute fidelity to his master," does such a motive justify his dealings with Abner?

*5th Day: Ishbosheth Assassinated.*

Read 2 Sam. 4.

1. One foul deed rapidly followed another. However, the assassination of Ishbosheth by two Gibeonite captains of his own tribe brought the long struggle between the house of David and the house of Saul to a crisis. The covenant made with the Gibeonites centuries before had been violated by Saul (look up 2 Sam. 21:1), and they now determined to avenge themselves. Though their treachery must be recorded as another heinous crime in the annals of Israel, it nevertheless furthered mightily the cause of David.

2. The story is tragic. Two Gibeonite officers in the king's service, thinking to win favor, entered Ishbosheth's bed-chamber one summer afternoon while he was taking his *siesta,* and slew him on his bed. Cutting off his head, they hastened with it to David, expecting to receive a handsome reward. But David was no enemy of Saul's house; he was rather its champion. He therefore rewarded them as he had previously done the Amalekite who claimed to have slain Saul. See 2 Sam. 1:1-16. By his order, accordingly, the royal guards struck them down. Ishbosheth's head was then respectfully buried in the grave of Abner at Hebron.

3. With the death of Ishbosheth, the house of Saul became so weakened that all hope on the part of northern Israel to maintain a separate independence completely vanished. No other rival now stood in David's path except the crippled twelve-year-old son of Jonathan, named Mephibosheth, or more correctly "Meribaal." See 1 Chron. 8:34. But he laid no claims to the throne. Toward him David showed the utmost kindness.

4. The other surviving descendants of Saul were either too young or too weak to offer resistance. Later, as the history states, seven of them were executed, because of

a famine which was supposed to have been caused by Saul's violation of the covenant between Israel and Gibeon. See again 2 Sam. 21:1-9. But Mephibosheth was spared.

Compare David's splendid encomiums on Abner and Ishbosheth in 2 Sam. 3:38 and 4:11.

*6th Day: David Established King in Jerusalem.*

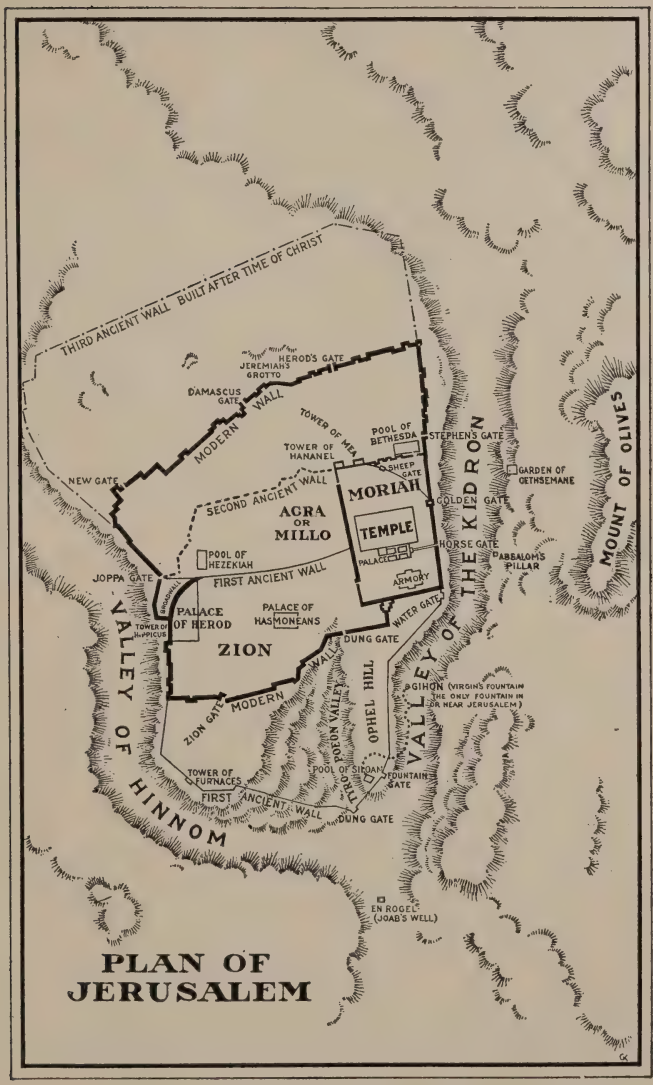
Read 2 Sam. 5.

1. The northern tribes of Israel soon made it known that they, too, desired David to rule over them. Coming together in a great national assembly at Hebron, they reminded him that he and they belonged to a common ancestry; they then anointed him king over all Israel, and sealed their covenant to be his loyal subjects with an oath. A feast of three days' duration followed. See 1 Chron. 12:39.

2. But in accepting Israel's offer of fealty, David practically renounced his vassalage to the Philistines. At any rate, in their eyes he was guilty of revolt, and they determined to destroy his kingdom in the bud. Even before David had time to gather his forces, they invaded Judah, seized Bethlehem, and forced him to take refuge in his former stronghold—probably the Cave of Adullam (Sayce), or "the newly captured stronghold of Zion" (Ottley).

3. For a considerable time, David and the Philistines carried on a guerrilla warfare. More and more, however, the Israelites gained in power, until at length, at a place near Gibeon called Baal-perazim, the Philistines were completely routed and forever driven from Israel's territory. In their flight, they left the images of their gods behind them.

4. David showed rare military genius also in capturing Jerusalem from the Jebusites and in establishing there his new capital. The fortress of this ancient citadel had


THIRD ANCIENT WALL BUILT AFTER TIME OF CHRIST
HEROD'S GATE
JEREMIAH'S GROTTO
DAMASCUS GATE
MODERN WALL
TOWER OF HANANEL
POOL OF BETHESDA
STEPHEN'S GATE
TOWER OF MEA
SHEEP GATE
NEW GATE
SECOND ANCIENT WALL
MORIAH
GOLDEN GATE
GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE
AGRA OR MILLO
TEMPLE
HORSE GATE
POOL OF HEZEKIAH
PALACE
ABSALOM'S PILLAR
JOPPA GATE
FIRST ANCIENT WALL
ARMORY
PALACE OF HEROD
PALACE OF HASMONEANS
WATER GATE
TOWER OF PHASAEL
ZION
DUNG GATE
MODERN WALL
GIHON (VIRGIN'S FOUNTAIN THE ONLY FOUNTAIN IN OR NEAR JERUSALEM)
ZION GATE
OPHEL HILL
TYROPOEON VALLEY
TOWER OF FURNACES
POOL OF SILOAM
FOUNTAIN GATE
FIRST ANCIENT WALL
DUNG GATE
EN ROGEL (JOAB'S WELL)
VALLEY OF HINNOM
VALLEY OF THE KIDRON
MOUNT OF OLIVES
PLAN OF JERUSALEM

always been considered impregnable. When David ventured to assail it, the taunt was returned that even the lame and the blind could easily defend it against him. See 2 Sam. 5:6.

5. Nevertheless, David took the stronghold, and made it his capital; and thereafter, it became known as "the city of David." The importance of this event cannot be over-estimated. Jerusalem's central location, its natural defence, "difficult to capture and easy to defend;" its situation on neutral ground between Judah and Benjamin, and its ancient associations with the priest-king Melchizedek, made this the wisest selection possible as a capital for the reunited kingdom, and it is one of the best illustrations of David's foresight and executive ability.

Contrast David at fifteen and David at forty, and account for his intellectual and spiritual development.

*7th Day: Recapitulation.*

Review rapidly 1 Sam. 16—2 Sam. 5.

1. Up to this point, we have examined the first half only of David's wonderful career. Probably for more than fifteen years he was a humble shepherd boy; apparently for fifteen more he was an outlaw in exile, cruelly driven by Saul from place to place; then, for seven and a half years more he was tribal king of Judah, at the expiration of which he was elected king of all Israel, and established himself in his new capital at Jerusalem.

2. The following are a few of the great outstanding virtues of his character as displayed in these earlier years:

(1) His courage in slaying Goliath.

(2) His passive submission to Saul's cruel hate.

(3) His diplomacy in winning to himself both the sympathy of his own countrymen, and the friendship of his enemies, the Philistines.

(4) His sincere sorrow over the death of Saul and Jonathan.

(5) His forbearance with the house of Saul, when he was the designated successor to the throne, as announced by Samuel at his sacrifice in Bethlehem.

(6) His wise statesmanship in the choice of Jerusalem as the new capital of reunited Israel.

(7) But above all, his unswerving trust in the Providence of God.

3. These, among others which might be mentioned, were the qualities which distinguished David prior to his coronation as king of all Israel. From this point on, we shall discover how well he stood the strain of his new and exalted position, and what, on the other hand, were some of his weaknesses.

## STUDY XIV.

### David, King of all Israel (2 Sam. 6—2 Kings 2).

*1st Day: Jerusalem Made a Religious Centre.*

Read 2 Sam. 6 and 7.

1. David, in contrast with Saul, was not content to have a capital without a shrine. The ark of the covenant, which for almost seventy years had been in the possession of an Israelite at Kirjath-jearim, David determined to bring up and deposit within his new citadel. Uzzah's rashness, however, in handling the sacred chest, thwarted the king's first attempt, and consequently it was left to abide in the house of Obed-edom, the Gittite, who greatly prospered through its presence.

2. But after three months the king renewed his purpose (the ark being borne this time upon men's shoulders; cf. 2 Sam. 6:13), and brought it with pomp and joy and music and dancing into the new tent which he had prepared for it. See 2 Chron. 1:3, 4. Its presence made Jerusalem "The Holy City."

3. "It was the greatest day of David's life, and the turning point in the history of the nation" (Stanley). Only one incident marred its glory. Michal, who apparently never became weaned from her *teraphim* (cf. 1 Sam. 19:13), showed her utter lack of sympathy with the devotional side of David's nature, by pouring forth a torrent of venomous sarcasm. Whereupon, David replied to his irreligious wife in volleys similar. "Taunts provoke taunts." As a result, Michal and David seem to have parted for ever.

4. The event of bringing up the ark has been celebrated

by the Psalmist in the twenty-fourth Psalm. Says Cornill, "If anything in the Psalms was really composed by David, it is the words of the twenty-fourth Psalm, which may very well have been sung on the occasion of that great celebration." It should be read antiphonally. Notice that the portals of the heathen city are fancied as too low for the "King of Glory" to enter.

5. But David was not yet satisfied. He wished also to build Jehovah a permanent house. Through the prophet Nathan, however, God gave answer to the contrary. Nathan said, Thou shalt not build *Him* a house, but He will build *you* a house; that is, He will build you a throne, a dynasty, and a kingdom, culminating in the Messiah; hence, permanent and perpetual.

Look up 1 Chron. 28:3 for the reason why David was not allowed to build Jehovah a house.

*2d Day: David's Marvellous Victories.*

Read 2 Sam. 8—10.

1. *Over the Philistines.*—Though already incorporated into David's kingdom, by renewed hostilities with them David entirely broke their spirit, and took forever the supremacy they had wielded out of their hands. "Instead of his being their vassal, they became vassals to him, paying him tribute" (Sayce). See 2 Sam. 8:1.

2. *Over Moab.*—According to a Jewish tradition, the king of Moab had put to death David's aged parents. But whatever was the cause of the war, David was successful, exterminating two-thirds of the nation, and reducing the remainder to slavery. See 2 Sam. 8:2, and compare 23:20.

3. *Over Hadadezer, king of Zobah.*—Assyria and Babylonia were at that time powerless. Hadadezer of Syria had attempted to establish his empire on the ruins of that of the Hittites. David warred a long time with him and his allies, but in the end came off conqueror with rich booty. The whole region about Damascus was

added to David's possessions, and even Toi, the king of Hamath, sent David valuable presents. See 2 Sam. 8:3-12.

4. *Over the Edomites* (not Syrians: the parallel account in 1 Chron. 18:12 is a corrective of the text in 2 Sam. 8:13, 14).—While David was occupied in the extreme north the Edomites invaded Judah from the south. Joab defeated them at the south end of the Dead Sea, and they also became tributary.

5. *Over the Ammonites.*—The insult which Hanun insolently returned David's ambassadors who had been sent to congratulate him, was received as a declaration of war. The war was a protracted one. The Ammonites hired their neighbors, the Arameans, as mercenaries. A double attack was necessary. Abishai assisted Joab. Both were victorious, and after a long siege Rabbah, the capital of Ammon, fell. See 2 Sam. 10.

6. *Amalek also was conquered* (cf. 2 Sam. 8:12).—"Jehovah gave victory to David whithersoever he went" (cf. vs. 6, 14). Thus, under the leadership of David, Israel had, in a few years, become the dominant and most important nation in Western Asia; "and yet it cannot be claimed that David began a single one of these wars" (Cornill).

How do you account for David's great popularity then and thereafter? See 2 Sam. 8:15.

*3d Day: David's Great Transgression.*

Read 2 Sam. 11 and 12.

1. Just when David reached the zenith of his power, he fell; having conquered all the nations round about him, he failed to conquer himself. He committed a double crime—one which sowed seeds of evil for the remainder of his life. It is the great blemish of his career.

2. To understand the heinousness of the transgression, it is necessary to remember the loftiness of his position.

He was at the head of one of the most conspicuous world-powers of his age. He had an army of 280,000 soldiers. Joab was commander-in-chief; under him there were more than thirty heroes or officers, who had distinguished themselves for their valor during the Philistine wars. See 2 Sam. 23 and 1 Chron. 11. He had a personal bodyguard of 600 hired mercenaries known as Pelethites, Cherethites and Gittites. See 2 Sam. 8:18.

3. David was also a great organizer. He instituted courts of justice, developed commerce, appointed superintendents of agriculture (cf. 1 Chron. 27:25), and organized the Levites and the singers of the tabernacle. In short, as it was said of Augustus that "he found Rome brick and left it marble," so it may be said of David he found the nation in chaos and organized it.

4. Yet David fell. He committed adultery and then attempted to cover his transgression with murder. He ought to have known better. He was fully 50 years of age at the time. But "in every good man there are still two natures striving for the mastery." Note that David was tempted when prosperous, and during a period of idleness (see 2 Sam. 11:1); and that his sin was the natural climax to a long life of polygamy, and one common to Oriental despots. But no apology can excuse him. "Passion had dethroned conscience" (Taylor).

5. A whole year passed before his sin was made public and confessed. The prophet Nathan was the agent. By means of the exquisite parable of the "Ewe Lamb," which is incomparably the finest thing of its kind in the Old Testament, Nathan brought the king to himself. David received with meekness the prophet's solemn indictment "Thou art the man," and acknowledged that he had sinned against Jehovah. Few kings would have made such frank confession.

In the light of 2 Sam. 11 and 12, read Psalm 51, and then Psalm 32.

*4th Day: Absalom's Conspiracy and David's Flight.*

Read 2 Sam. 13—17.

1. The latter portion of David's reign stands in striking contrast to the earlier. "Though the repentance of the king was deep and sincere, the long train of miseries which resulted from David's evil example forms a kind of divine commentary on the heinous character of his crime" (Ottley).

2. Amnon defiled his half-sister Tamar and then turned her away dishonored from his door. See 2 Sam. 13:1-19. Absalom, Tamar's brother, waited subtly for two years and revengefully slew Amnon. He then fled for refuge to his mother's father, the king of Geshur. Strictly, Absalom, in killing Amnon, had only done what David was required by law to do. For three years in Geshur and for two more in Jerusalem, during which "he saw not the king's face," David and Absalom were estranged. Joab's attempt to effect a reconciliation between them failed. It was formal and hollow. See 2 Sam. 14:33.

3. About this time David seems to have fallen sick. See Psalms 41:8, and 39:4, 13. Absalom took advantage of the situation and planned to seize his father's throne. "For four years he systematically courted popularity, and succeeded in winning it, although his rival was Israel's conqueror king" (Kent). David's treatment of Absalom had alienated him, and his indifference to the people seems also to have alienated them. Disaffection spread rapidly. Even Ahithophel, the aged grandfather of Bathsheba (cf. 2 Sam. 11:3; 23:34), and David's faithful counselor, deserted him and went over to Absalom.

4. David was forced to abdicate. He fled to Mahanaim, leaving ten of his concubines behind to look after the house. Many of his friends and servants, among whom were Joab and Abishai, his bodyguard, and the Levites accompanied him. But David refused to remove the ark

from Jerusalem. Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, were commissioned to remain and report to him any information concerning Absalom's designs. And Hushai, the Archite, was deputed to return to thwart the counsel of Ahithophel.

5. Absalom with his retinue entered Jerusalem almost immediately after David's departure. His first act was to take public possession of his father's harem. This from the Oriental point of view made future reconciliation between him and his father impossible. Ahithophel then advised that Absalom and his men pursue the king at once. Hushai advised the mustering of an army first. The latter's advice carried. Ahithophel's pride was wounded and he killed himself. This is the first case of deliberate and premeditated suicide recorded in the Bible.

In what sense had Jehovah bidden Shimei to curse David? See 2 Sam. 16:11.

*5th Day: Absalom's Defeat and David's Return.*

Read 2 Sam. 18—20.

1. With the suicide of Ahithophel, the interest of the plot reaches its climax. Absalom and his army pass over the Jordan. David divides his forces into three companies under Joab, Abishai and Ittai. The fatal battle took place in the "forest of Ephraim," somewhere near Mahanaim. David was too old to enter the contest in person. But his parting advice to his officers was to spare his son's life. Joab, however, knew that the death of Absalom meant victory for the king. When, therefore, Absalom got caught by the head (or "hair," as Josephus says) in a terebinth, Joab thrust him through with three darts.

2. David's extreme sorrow as mourner for his rebellious son was indefensible. "He allowed the passion of his emotion to sweep him away, and he wept as a woman and not as a man" (Sayce). His unrestrained and Oriental

feeling, though a proof of his genuine affection for his son, almost cost him his kingdom. His followers began to forsake him in disgust. Joab's harsh rebuke, however, brought him to his senses. But David never forgave Joab for his rough speech. See 2 Sam. 19:5-7, and compare 1 Kings 2:5, 6.

3. The war over, all the tribes of Israel except Judah invited David to return to Jerusalem. The elders of Judah waited until the king shamed them into requesting his return. Just here David lost his wonted discretion. He made the vital mistake of allowing Judah *alone* to escort him in triumphal procession. The result was Israel became jealous; and not long after, Sheba, a Benjamite, led a movement which, two generations later, culminated in permanent schism between Israel and Judah.

4. The king appointed Amasa to quell Sheba's rebellion. This was an insult to Joab, and he murdered Amasa in cold blood, as he had aforetime Abner. Joab then went forward with the royal army, and drove Sheba into the extreme north of the country to Abel, near Dan, where eventually he was beheaded.

What lessons do you learn from the life and character of Absalom? Ahithophel? Joab?

*6th Day: The Closing Years of David's Life.*

Glance through 2 Sam. 21—1 Kings 2.

1. The last ten years of David's life seem to have been passed in undisturbed repose. "Israel was at peace with her neighbors, and there was no Absalom to steal away the hearts of the people by his beauty and winsomeness of manner" (Sayce). Assyria, Babylonia and Egypt were all weak during David's period; while the smaller kingdoms of Syria, Ammon, Moab, Edom and Phœnicia were either wholly subdued by David or in alliance with him. Saul's house was completely fallen, and David's dynasty was apparently secure.

2. David numbered Israel and Judah, not with a view to the levying of taxes, but in order to ascertain the number of fighting men in Israel. This royal conscription was not only displeasing to God, but unpopular with the people. See 2 Sam. 24:3. The Orientals still have strong prejudices against a census of any kind. David's own heart smote him for having done so (compare 2 Sam. 24:10), and he was punished. But the divine chastisement issued in his purchase of the threshing-floor of Araunah, the Jebusite, as a place on which to build an altar. Look up 2 Sam. 24:16-18. It afterwards became the site of Solomon's Temple. See 2 Chron. 3:1.

3. More and more David became enfeebled in mind and body. The hardship and privations of his early manhood and the self-indulgence of his polygamous life in later years had weakened his constitution, and he slowly sank into his grave. He was approaching seventy years of age. Two of his sons became rivals for the throne: Adonijah, his oldest son and natural heir; and Solomon, the son of the ambitious Bathsheba. Joab and Abiathar favored Adonijah. Nathan, the prophet, and Zadok supported Solomon. Adonijah attempted to usurp the power; but the dying king, through Bathsheba's intercession, formally recognized Solomon as the rightful successor to the throne. "David must have died soon after" (Cornill).

May not Abishag, the Shunammite of 1 Kings 1:3 and 2:17, be the heroine of the "Song of Solomon"? See Song of Sol. 6:13.

*7th Day: An Estimate of David.*

1. In estimating the character of David, it is generally allowed that he is the most gifted and versatile personage in Israelitish history; that he is surpassed in ethical greatness and general historical importance only by Moses; that he completed what Moses began; that he created out of Israel a nation and raised it to its highest

eminence; that in spite of all his human frailties he was a genuinely pious man, an ideal ruler, a lover of righteousness and peace, and the only man of his age who appreciated Israel's religious destiny. "And so we can easily understand how the eyes of Israel rested in grateful reverence upon this figure, and how a Second David became the dream of Israel's future" (Cornill).

2. He founded a dynasty. He established the principle of monarchy. He was patriotic, generous and kind; a man of strong impulses and firm faith; brave, politic and forgiving; yet a child of his time. Above all, he was religious. He fostered a simple trust in God; he was a heinous sinner, but a correspondingly sincere penitent.

3. He was "the sweet psalmist of Israel" (cf. 2 Sam. 23:1); there is really no reason why many of the 73 Psalms ascribed to him should not belong to the Davidic period and be the work of David himself. "However the historian may settle David's character, whether he be a just ruler, great in his own right, or an astute usurper who has snatched the laurels of another, his authentic writings will hand him down to all future time as the world's greatest master of lyric song. He has entered closest to the heart of nature; he has caught, as none other, its ever manifold expression; he has soared nearest heaven, and lifted mankind toward divinity" (Murray).

Read Psalm 18. It is a duplicate of 2 Sam. 22, and is considered, by some, the only poem of the collection really composed by David.

## STUDY XV.

### Solomon, the King of Peace (1 Kings 1—11; cf. 2 Chron. 1—9).

*1st Day: Solomon "Established" without a Rival.*

Read 1 Kings 1 and 2.

1. In spite of his brother Adonijah's treason, Solomon obtained his father's crown, and was bequeathed a brilliant legacy. Being but a mere boy (cf. 1 Kings 3:7) when he began to reign, not more than eighteen at the most, his father advised him in his dying charge to dispose of those who might oppose him, or try to wrest the government out of his hands. Solomon found wisdom in his father's counsel, and, in keeping with Oriental despotism, forthwith despatched his chief rivals.

2. Adonijah, for example, was executed on the mere suspicion that by asking to have Abishag for a wife he was beginning to intrigue. See 1 Kings 2:13-25. The venerable Abiathar was deposed from the priesthood and banished to his native town of Anathoth, because he had encouraged Adonijah to seize the throne. See 1 Kings 2:26, 27. Eli's house thus became extinct, Zadok being appointed in Abiathar's place. Then Joab, in fear, fled for refuge to the altar. But Jehovah's altar could not protect a wilful murderer. At the king's command, Benaniah took and slew him, and was afterward appointed captain of Israel's hosts in his place. See 1 Kings 2:28-35. Even Shimei, who had violently cursed David in his flight at the time of Absalom's rebellion, was kept for three years under strict surveillance in the city of Jerusalem, and suddenly perished when he sought to re-

cover two renegade servants who had fled to Gath. See 1 Kings 2:12, 46.

3. Thus the youthful sovereign, having disposed of his most dangerous foes, triumphed over the opposing factions in Israel, and seated himself securely upon his father's throne without a rival to contest it. "And the kingdom was *established* in the hand of Solomon" (cf. 1 Kings 2:12, 46).

What prophecy was fulfilled by the deposition of Abiathar? Look up 1 Sam. 2:27-36 and compare 1 Kings 2:27.

*2d Day: Solomon's Dream at Gibeon.*

Read 1 Kings 3, and 2 Chron. 1.

1. Solomon's early marriage with the daughter of Pharaoh was an event of great importance. By this union he won both the Canaanitish city of Gezer, and the protection of the Delta over which his father-in-law ruled. Solomon was a shrewd diplomat. All his marriages had a political aim. They insured peace. For something like forty years Israel scarcely saw a battle (cf. 1 Kings 11:42). "There is not such a period of protracted peace in all the Jewish annals" (Matheson).

2. But the crowning event of Solomon's early years was his choice of wisdom. Having been reared, as is probable, under the influence of Nathan, the prophet, he was deeply religious. Accordingly, one of his earliest acts as king was to visit the high place of Gibeon and sacrifice a thousand burnt offerings upon the altar of Moses which stood there before the Tent of Meeting. See 1 Chron. 21:29.

3. On the following night, he had a dream which was a source of blessed revelation to him. In his dream Jehovah asked him what gift he would chiefly prize as a sign of real greatness. And instead of asking for long life, or riches, or honor, the young king, conscious of the grave responsibilities of his position, asked for prac-

tical "wisdom"; that is, keenness to perceive that which is not at first apparent, and tact to act as a man of experience. His decision was pleasing to God, and inspired confidence in his people.

4. Not long after, a test was made of his wisdom. Two mothers stood before him accusing each other of the same crime; and there were no witnesses. A modern judge would have dismissed the case for want of evidence. Solomon, however, quickly devised a stratagem which revealed the real mother. From village to village the story of the incident was repeated and the king's insight into human nature was everywhere applauded.

By sacrificing at Gibeon, did Solomon really violate the law of the unity of sanctuary as taught in Deut. 12:10, 11? Notice the "when" and the "then" of the passage.

*3d Day: Solomon's Cabinet and State Officers.*

Read 1 Kings 4.

1. "Under David domestic conditions in Israel remained patriarchal and primitive. The king was only a sheikh on a large scale. It was Solomon's accomplishment and merit to have rid the Israelites of the last trace of Bedouin character and to have trained them into national citizenship. If David created an Israelitish nation, Solomon created an Israelitish state" (Cornill).

2. Solomon's government was an absolutism. Everything depended upon his will and was made to minister to his greatness. Independence of any kind on the part of his subjects was checked. With the exception of two members who served under his father, he formed an entirely new cabinet, he himself being over all. He was also the head of the Jewish church.

3. The members of his cabinet were called "princes." Among them were the following officers: three priests, two secretaries, a historiographer, a commander-in-chief of

the army, a general overseer of all the other officers, a privy counselor, a steward, and a tax collector. See 1 Kings 4:2-6.

4. Ignoring the old tribal divisions, he mapped out Israel and Judah into twelve districts, which only partially corresponded to the ancient boundaries. Over these he set twelve officers for fiscal purposes, whose principal duty was to furnish provisions for the royal household. Each district provided supplies for one month. Two of the officers were sons-in-law of the king; the first in the list being Benhur of the hill country of Ephraim. See 1 Kings 4:7-19.

5. Continued peace brought great prosperity. The early years of Solomon's administration witnessed an almost incredible increase in wealth. The king supported an immense retinue of dependents, "many of whom were doubtless foreigners attached to the various princesses whom Solomon wedded" (Wade). The maintenance of his huge harem necessarily entailed a heavy burden upon the state.

What is said of Solomon's wisdom in 1 Kings 4:32, 33? Was he really acquainted with the facts of natural history, or did his knowledge consist largely of fables and witty deductions drawn from the trees and animals?

*4th Day: The Building of the Temple.*

Read 1 Kings 5—7, and 2 Chron. 2—4.

1. Solomon's alliance with Hiram was a clever stroke of state policy so far as building the Temple was concerned, but religiously it paved the way for the introduction, later, of the gross idolatries of Baal. According to the terms of the treaty, Solomon supplied Hiram with food in return for timber from Mount Lebanon. See 1 Kings 5:1-12.

2. But the king's great need was workmen. In order to secure an adequate force he resorted to *corvée,* or forced

labor, reducing the Canaanites to the grade of state slaves (cf. 1 Kings 9:20, 21); when these were found to be insufficient he drafted free-born Israelites also, compelling them to work in sections of ten thousand every fourth month. See 1 Kings 5:13-18.

3. Like Rameses II., Solomon was a great builder. But of all his many public works the Temple became the most important, though in reality it was only a part of the king's palace, and compared with modern edifices of its class was insignificantly small. However, "it was a shrine, not a church; a house for God, not for the people" (Winterbotham). It was located on Mount Moriah, where once was the threshing-floor of Araunah, and possibly, also, where Abraham offered Isaac. See 2 Chron. 3:1. Materials had been gathered for it by David (cf. 1 Chron. 22:2-4), but work was not actually begun until Solomon's fourth year, or about 975 B. C. See 1 Kings 6:1.

4. Seven years were spent in its construction. It was modeled after the Tabernacle of Moses, its measurements usually being double those of the latter. "Both its architect and architecture were Phœnician" (Sayce). Neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron was heard in the house while it was building (cf. 1 Kings 6:7). The sanctuary proper was inlaid with gold, as though carved out of one solid mass. Two immense pillars stood at the entrance of the court as guardians of the sanctuary. See 1 Kings 7:21. It was the great work of Solomon's life.

What was Solomon's primary motive in building the Temple?

*5th Day: Solomon's Prayer of Dedication.*

Read 1 Kings 8—9, and 2 Chron. 5—7.

1. When the palace was completed and all was ready, the "royal chapel" was appropriately dedicated in connection with the Feast of Tabernacles. The first event in the cere-

mony was the transfer of the Ark from the City of David to the Oracle, or Most Holy Place. By this act "David's work on its religious side now attained a character of permanence" (Kittel).

2. King Solomon, kneeling, then offered the dedicatory prayer, a prayer well worthy of him and the occasion. See 1 Kings 8:23-53. Rising from his knees, he stood and pronounced upon the assembly of Israel a solemn benediction (cf. 1 Kings 8:56-61). He then concluded the service by offering numerous sacrifices of peace, burnt and meal offerings. See 1 Kings 8:62-66.

3. The event was the inauguration of a new era in the history of the Jewish state. It helped to unify the nation and perpetuate the traditions of a venerable past. "For once all tribal and sectional jealousies were forgotten" (Winterbotham).

4. Solomon's prayer was answered. As at Gibeon, some twenty-four years before, Jehovah now spoke to the king in a dream, and promised to grant his petitions for his people, provided he and they remained faithful to Him; otherwise, "their fall would be as great as their rise." See 1 Kings 9:1-9.

5. Besides the numerous buildings and public works in Jerusalem, which Solomon constructed, such as "the house of the forest of Lebanon" (containing an audience room and armory), "the porch of the throne" (a hall of judgment), "a house for Pharaoh's daughter" (cf. 1 Kings 7:2-8), and Millo (a huge fortress to protect the Temple; cf. 1 Kings 9:24), he built, also, military defences and fortified cities throughout the kingdom. Among these were Upper and Lower Beth-horon, some twelve miles northwest of Jerusalem; the old Philistine city of Gezer, which had been given him as a part of his wife's dowry; Baalath, in the territory of Dan; Megiddo, on the edge of Galilee; Hazor, farther north; and Tamar, possibly the same as Engedi in the wilderness. See 1 Kings 9:15-19.

What was the special burden of Solomon's prayer? See 1 Kings 8:30, 32, 34, etc.

*6th Day: Solomon's Wisdom and Splendor.*

Read 1 Kings 10, and 2 Chron. 9.

1. About the middle of Solomon's reign he received a notable visit from the Queen of Sheba, who came "from the ends of the earth" to hear of his wisdom (cf. Matt. 12:42). The exact location of her dominions is not known, but was probably somewhere in the southernmost portion of Arabia. Her aim in visiting Solomon was presumably to establish a commercial treaty between herself and him.

2. Solomon took occasion to show her Jerusalem, its temple, palaces and fortifications. The queen was so overcome by the beauty of his capital, the food of his table, the attendance of his servants, and the general magnificence of his court, that "there was no more spirit in her." See 1 Kings 10:5. But it was his wisdom more than anything else which impressed her. She asked him questions and enigmas to test his ability, and all her riddles and conundrums were so cleverly answered that she finally exclaimed in words of congratulation: "Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, that stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom." And then, in keeping with Oriental custom, she presented Solomon with rich gifts, besides 120 talents of gold, or a little more than three million dollars. See 1 Kings 10:8-10.

3. If we ask what were some of the beautiful things which the Queen of Sheba beheld, the record leads us to conclude that on every hand there was a great display of gold (from Ophir), and silver (probably from the mines of Spain and Asia Minor), precious stones and spices (from Arabia), almug trees or sandalwood (from India), ivory (from India and eastern Africa), cedarwood (from Lebanon), a temple inlaid with pure gold, palaces and

stairways beautifully ornamented, an endless array of servants and cup-bearers, gorgeous apparel, a rich cuisine, drinking-vessels of gold, officers in costly uniform, and horses and chariots: in short, a capital worthy of a king whose wisdom and splendor eclipsed at the time all the other potentates of earth.

Was Israel ever forewarned against such royal extravagance? See 1 Sam. 8:10-18.

*7th Day: Solomon's Faults and Fall.*

Read 1 Kings 11.

1. The closing years of Solomon's career are very disappointing. One is tempted to pass them over in silence, as does the author of the Chronicles. But the book of 1 Kings tells plainly of his gross polygamy; and how, "when Solomon was old," his foreign wives turned away his heart after other gods. See 1 Kings 11:1-8.

2. From the Hebrew point of view, by erecting on high places sanctuaries dedicated to other gods, Solomon became guilty of high treason; and Jehovah was angry with him. However, He determined not to rend the kingdom from him, but from his son. Unto Solomon, nevertheless, Jehovah raised up "adversaries."

3. The first was Hadad, the Edomite, who in David's time had fled to Egypt, but who, as soon as he heard that David was dead, returned home, despised Israel and became king of Edom. A second was Rezon, who established himself in Damascus and was a thorn in Solomon's side all his days. See 1 Kings 11:9-25.

4. A more dangerous foe was Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, of the tribe of Ephraim, whom Solomon had elevated to be overseer of his tribesmen in the public works of the state. Jeroboam inwardly rebelled against the policy of the king. The prophet Ahijah encouraged him in his patriotism. But Solomon began to suspect him and he fled to Egypt for his life. See 1 Kings 11:26-40.

5. This brings us to the close of Solomon's career. "Amidst the clouds and gathering storm, the sun of that long summer day sank below the horizon" (Winterbotham). With all his wisdom "he forgot the best interests of his people in the pursuit of luxury and splendor, and nearly wrecked his nation" (Kent). "He died worn out by excessive self-indulgence, leaving behind him an impoverished treasury, a discontented people, and a tottering empire" (Sayce).

6. Yet "good once done, can never be entirely undone, and wisdom once spoken can never be entirely recalled" (Stanley). During Solomon's reign of forty years, which is fittingly called the Golden Age of Hebrew history, the people came to greater self-consciousness and the name of Jehovah gained in prestige among the nations. Fittingly, too, Solomon with all his wisdom and glory became the type of Him who was prophesied to rule in peace one day "from sea to sea." See Psalm 72:8.

## STUDY XVI.

### Rehoboam and Jeroboam (1 Kings 12—16; cf. 2 Chron. 10—22).

*1st Day: The State of Israel's Religion at Solomon's Death.*

Read again 1 Kings 8.

1. The construction of the *Temple* marked the beginning of a new era in Israel's religion. By reason of its position and the splendor of its architecture it insensibly attracted to it the worship of pious Israelites. It acquired at once special sanctity because it was the depository of the sacred Ark. True, indeed, the people still worshipped at "high places"; nevertheless, it was the Temple at which all that was best in Israel's religion was focused.

2. The *Priests* were subordinate to the king. Solomon himself is said to have sacrificed three times a year at Jerusalem (cf. 1 Kings 9:25), and on the occasion of the Feast of Tabernacles to have dismissed the people on the eighth day. See 1 Kings 8:66, 2 Chron. 7:9. Yet the priests were the custodians of the Temple and the counsellors of the king. By what means they ascertained the will of God is unknown, but not improbably they consulted the ephod as in David's time (cf. 1 Sam. 23:6).

3. The *Prophets* showed positive marks of independence and statesmanship. For example, in David's time Gad was an outspoken censor of the king's error in numbering the people (cf. 2 Sam. 24:11); in a similar manner Ahijah showed his disapproval of Solomon's despotism by rending his garment and giving ten pieces to Jeroboam. See 1 Kings 11:29-31; cf. 12:22-24.

4. The nation's conception of *Jehovah* at this time was doubtless somewhat vague. Still, "the belief that He had an exclusive claim to Israel's service and devotion had long been the prophets' traditional creed" (Wade). They probably allowed that the gods of the allied nations were real entities, and regarded them as Jehovah's active rivals (for the masses probably had not yet consciously arrived at the belief in strict monotheism); yet "the union of all the tribes under one human king, by a simple analogy intensified their faith in one divine king" (Kent).

Estimate Solomon's conception of God as exemplified in his prayer of dedication.

### *2d Day: The Causes of Disruption.*

Look up faithfully the Scripture references in the following section.

1. It would be a mistake to regard the disruption of Solomon's kingdom as due wholly to the short-sighted policy of his son. The real causes of schism lay deeper. Rehoboam's rough treatment of the northern tribes was only the *immediate* cause. "The disruption of the kingdom was not the work of a day, but the growth of centuries" (Stanley).

2. As far back as in the days of the Judges the north and the south were never really a unit. There is no mention of Judah in the list of the tribes who fought with Deborah against Sisera. See Judges 4 and 5.

3. Important cities, such as Gibeon and Jerusalem, were held by the Canaanites down until David's time. Territorially these were located in the very centre of the country, and tended to separate still more the north and the south.

4. Most of the principal leaders of Israel prior to David, including Joshua, Barak, Gideon, Samuel and Saul, belonged to the northern tribes; hence it was but natural

that they should dislike to have a Judean dynasty of kings permanently established to rule over them.

5. So frequently are the two names "Israel" and "Judah" employed in the history of Saul and David, the natural inference is that, even during the period of the united kingdom, they really stood aloof. Thus, Saul numbered them separately (cf. 1 Sam. 11:8); it was "Israel and Judah" who pursued the Philistines, after Goliath was slain (cf. 1 Sam. 17:52); when Saul died Ishbosheth was made king over all "Israel," but the house of "Judah" followed David (cf. 2 Sam. 2:8-11); and when David returned from east of the Jordan, "Israel" complained that "Judah" had stolen him away (cf. 2 Sam. 19:41).

6. But Solomon more than any other widened the gulf between the north and the south; through his lineage and inheritance, through his absolute and arbitrary rule as a sovereign, burdensome taxation, forced labor, and the general extravagance of his reign. These and other causes fostered in the hearts of the northern tribes a spirit of disloyalty and jealousy which only required a breath to fan them into a flame. Hence, before Rehoboam mounted the throne of his father, the way was prepared for schism.

What does Psalm 133 say about the blessedness of brethren dwelling together in unity?

*3d Day: Rehoboam's Folly.*

Read 1 Kings 12:1-20; cf. 2 Chron. 10.

1. According to an ancient tradition preserved in the Septuagint or Greek Version of the Old Testament, Rehoboam began to reign when but sixteen years of age. But according to 1 Kings 14:21 he was forty-one, which is possible. His mother was an Ammonitess. See 1 Kings 14:31.

2. He seems to have been promptly acknowledged by his own tribe as the legitimate successor of his father, and to

have occupied the throne for some time before he felt it necessary to go up to ancient Shechem to be formally inaugurated by the house of Israel.

3. For some time Israel had been quietly nursing a spirit of revolt against him and his government. Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who had fled to Egypt from fear of Solomon, had been recalled, and welcomed as an old and tried enemy of the house of David. Through him as spokesman, the Israelites made the simple and very justifiable demand that if they became Rehoboam's servants he should become theirs, and in the interests of justice lighten his father's taxes upon them. They hoped for a generous response. A tactful monarch could have averted a catastrophe by compromise.

4. Rehoboam asked three days' deliberation. Meanwhile he took counsel with his father's aged advisers, but also with the young men who were his companions in luxury; and, rejecting the good advice of his seniors to speak kindly unto Israel, he returned the response of his youthful associates, saying: My little finger will be *stronger* than my father's loins . . . I will add to your yoke. See 1 Kings 12:10, 11.

5. "The effect was instantaneous. Ten out of the twelve tribes renounced their allegiance to Rehoboam, departed to their tents, and were forever lost to the house of Israel" (Davis). By this brief, incautious word, he plunged himself into a revolution. He sent Adoram, his tax collector, to quell the insurrection, but they stoned him as an odious intruder. The king himself barely escaped. "Rehoboam was dethroned, and the national kingship once more became a tribal kingship." Force failed.

What does Prov. 20:28 say about the power of "kindness"?

*4th Day: Jeroboam, the Founder of a New Kingdom.*

Read 1 Kings 12:21-33.

1. Whether from the first Jeroboam had had a hand in Israel's rebellion, or whether he was summoned home merely because he was known to be a veteran opponent of the house of Israel, in any case he doubtless remembered the symbolic action and prophecy of Ahijah, and was conscious of being the leader of a strong democratic movement (cf. 1 Kings 11:29-40).

2. But besides Ahijah, the prophet Shemaiah was also on Jeroboam's side. For, when Rehoboam determined a second time to coerce the Ten Tribes into submission Shemaiah warned him to return from going up to war with them; and he did return (cf. 1 Kings 12:22-24). Nevertheless, hostilities seem to have been carried on between the two kingdoms for some time. See 1 Kings 14:30.

3. Now in view of the sympathetic attitude of Ahijah and Shemaiah, one is forced to inquire, To what extent did the prophets sympathize with Jeroboam? Did they share the modern view, held by some, that it was Judah who revolted from Israel, rather than Israel from Judah?

4. To all such inquiries, Jeroboam's religious policy alone, aside from the fact that Ahijah subsequently broke away from Jeroboam (cf. 1 Kings 14:1-18), is a sufficient answer. While in Egypt, Jeroboam had learned of the worship of the Apis Bull. Upon his return he saw plainly that the Temple at Jerusalem, "which can hardly have been undertaken wholly without the design of creating in time a central place of worship for Israel" (Kittel), was destined to become the important centre of gravity for the nation, unless something were done to counteract its influence. The Temple had no image. He therefore set up two golden bulls in the sacred shrines of Bethel and Dan, as an act of political prudence. His policy succeeded, but it was "a backward step, and an abuse, and

was doubtless so regarded by the best in the nation" (Kittel).

Who, prior to Jeroboam, had instigated a similar rebellion? See 2 Sam. 20:1.

*5th Day: The Consequences of Disruption.*

Read 1 Kings 13—14; cf. 2 Chron. 11—12.

1. A tragic future now confronted the Hebrews. David's monarchy, with all its promising prospects, had lasted barely two generations. Countless sufferings and sorrows were destined to come shortly upon Judah and Israel, "the consequence, almost without exception, of the unhappy state of rupture" (Kittel).

2. First, there was felt by the two opposing kingdoms the need of stronger fortifications. Constant warfare between them, however, greatly crippled their efforts in this direction. Rehoboam fortified Bethlehem, Tekoa, Adullam, Gath, Hebron and various other places in Judah and Benjamin (cf. 2 Chron. 11:5-12); while Jeroboam built Shechem and Penuel (cf. 1 Kings 12:25), and transferred his court to Tirzah (cf. 1 Kings 14:17).

3. Israel was destined to suffer from foreign invasion, while Judah, barring the invasion of Shishak, which is about to be related, enjoyed comparative tranquillity, and being in possession of the Temple, in spite of her smallness prolonged her existence for more than two centuries. Jeroboam founded no lasting dynasty; but in Judah the regular succession of Davidic kings went on uninterrupted till the Captivity.

4. The first foreign invasion affected Judah especially. In the fifth year of Rehoboam, Shishak, the founder of the twenty-second dynasty, organized a marauding expedition —the only warlike deed on his part of which we have any information—and invaded Judah, carrying off the gold and other treasures of the Temple, and subjugated one hundred and fifty-six towns and districts. The names of

these towns stand in long rows, each enclosed in a *cartouche,* on the outer southern wall of the temple of Ammon at Karnak in Upper Egypt. Among them are the names of several places belonging to Israel, also, which shows that Shishak's invasion of Canaan must have been extensive. See 1 Kings 14:25, 26.

What does Jesus say is the inevitable result of schism? See Mark 3:24, 25.

*6th Day: Jeroboam's Immediate Successors.*

Read 1 Kings 15—16.

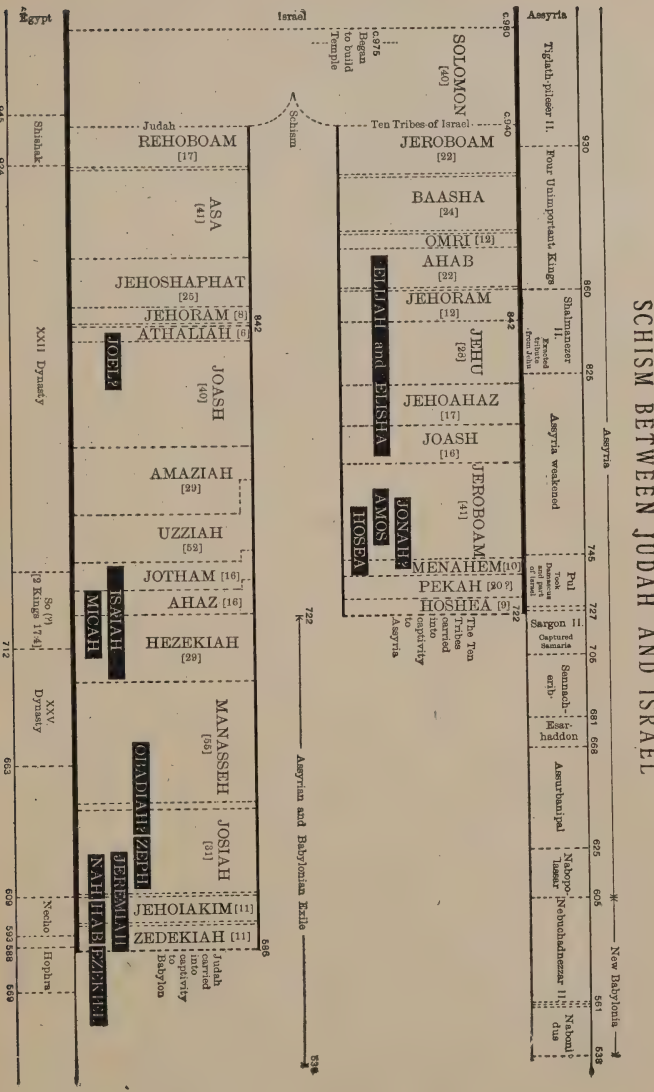
1. For the history of the Ten Tribes we are indebted almost exclusively to the author of Kings: the Chronicler confines himself to the story of the kingdom of Judah. The one is prophetic; the other, priestly.

2. The problem of mastering this somewhat intricate and perplexing period may perhaps be simplified by considering the first century by itself. There is a break in the history of both kingdoms about the year 842, when Jehu killed at one time Jehoram of Israel and Ahaziah of Judah (cf. 2 Kings 9:21-28). See Diagram. The aggregate reigns of the two lines of kings, down to Jehu, are approximately the same:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Rehoboam | 17 | Jeroboam | 22 |
| Abijam | 3 | Nadab | 2 |
| Asa | 41 | Baasha | 24 |
| Jehoshaphat | 25 | Elah | 2 |
| Jehoram | 8 | Omri | 12 |
| Ahaziah | 1 | Ahab | 22 |
| | 95 | Ahaziah | 2 |
| | | Jehoram | 12 |
| | | | 98 |

The discrepancy is only apparent; the Hebrews had no fixed rule of counting the accession year of a king as the first regnal year. Some did; others did not.

# SCHISM BETWEEN JUDAH AND ISRAEL



3. Taking Israel first, the outstanding events of the century were: (1) *Jeroboam's* new fortifications and wars with Judah. (2) *Nadab's* siege of the Philistine city of Gibbethon. (3) *Baasha's* destruction of the house of Jeroboam, his making Tirzah the capital, and his wars with Asa. (4) *Elah's* tragic end at the hands of the would-be usurper, Zimri. (5) *Omri's* speedy vengeance on Zimri, his rivalry with Tibni for the throne, his purchase of the hill of Samaria for a capital, and his subjection of Moab (according to the inscription of King Mesha, known as the "Moabite Stone"). Omri is the first king of Israel whose name is mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions. (6) *Ahab's* marriage with Jezebel, and his wars with Benhadad, king of Servia. (7) *Ahaziah's* idolatry. (8) *Jehoram's* recovery of Moab, and his violent death at the hands of Jehu.

4. Thus "dynasty followed dynasty. Conspiracy and usurpation hardly ever ceased. It must have seemed to contemporaries as if the curse of God rested on the kingdom which had wilfully separated itself from the house of David" (Kittel).

Look up the messages of the prophet Jehu to (a) Baasha, (b) Jehoshaphat, and (c) Asa. See 1 Kings 16:1-4, 2 Chron. 19:2, 3 and 16:7-10.

*7th Day: Rehoboam's Immediate Successors.*

Review 1 Kings 15—16; cf. 2 Chron. 13—22.

1. In Judah, during the same period, the principal events which happened were: (1) *Rehoboam's* losses to Shishak, his wars with Jeroboam, and his religious defection. (2) *Abijam's* temporary victory over Jeroboam and his capture of Bethel and its towns. (3) *Asa's* drastic reformation, even removing his idolatrous mother from her position as queen-dowager; his defeat of Zerah, the Ethiopian, who, though by some identified with Osorkon II., is quite unknown to Egyptian history; and his success

in forcing Baasha to leave off building Ramah as a border blockade. (4) *Jehoshaphat's* reforms, his fortifications, and the tightening of his hold upon the Philistines, Arabians and Edomites. (5) *Jehoram's* marriage with Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab; and the revolts of Libnah, and of the Edomites. (6) *Ahaziah's* violent death at the hand of Jehu.

2. Thus the history of Judah, like that of Israel, comes to a violent break with the accession of Jehu. In both kingdoms there was strife, and a steady decline in religion, with only now and then a prophetic voice of warning. Between the two kingdoms, however, the relations became more and more friendly, until in the days of Ahab, when, instead of fighting against each other, they fought together against their common foe.

3. "From a political point of view, the Pre-Assyrian period of Hebrew history was one of steady decline, only temporarily checked by the energetic efforts of such kings as Jehoshaphat, Omri and Ahab. The rich resources of Israel were being exhausted by repeated revolutions; the strength of the Hebrew race was being wasted by a fruitless civil war; and the energies of the entire Palestinian world were being dissipated by internecine conflicts, waged with the cruelty and destructiveness characteristic of the age" (Kent).

With the help of the diagram (page 157), master as completely as possible the principal events of the first century of Schism.

THE KINGDOMS OF
JUDAH
AND
ISRAEL
BERYTUS
SIDON
ZAREPHATH
TYRE
CANAANITES
MT. LEBANON
R. ABANA
HELBON
DAMASCUS
MT. HERMON
R. PHARPAR
ABEL BETH-MAACHAH
DAN OR LAISH
BETH-REHOB
BAAL GAD
KEDESH NAPHTALI
HAZOR
WATERS OF MEROM
GOLAN
ACHZIB
ABDON
ACCHO
HAZOR
Bashan
MT. CARMEL
BETH ARBEL
SEA OF CHINNERETH
APHEK
ASHTAROTH KARNAIM
KENATH-NOBAH
JEBEL HAURAN
MADON
SHIMRON
GATH-HEPHER
JAPHIA
MT. TABOR
EDREI
DOR
NAM
SHUNEM
MEGIDDO
MEROZ
TAANACH
MT. GILBOA
HADAD-RIMMON
MAHANAIM
KERIOTH
SALCAH
EN-GANNIM
BETH-SHAN
JABESH-GILEAD
BOZRAH
ISRAEL
ABEL-MEHOLAH
ATAROTH
GEBA
THEBEZ
SAMARIA
TIRZAH
MT. EBAL
SHECHEM
MT. GERIZIM
OPHRAH
ZARETAN
R. JABBOK
ADAM
RAMOTH GILEAD
JAPHO
BILEATH
SHILOH
AROER
RABBATH AMMON
BETHEL
OPHRAH
ORMMON
BETH-HORON
BETH NIMRAH
ELEALEH
HESHBON
MEDEBA
ASHDOD
ASHKELON
GATH
ADULLAM
LACHISH
LIBNAH
GAZA
OLGLON
BETHSHEMESH
ARMUTH
GIBEAH
BETHZUR
JUDAH
MARESHAH
HEBRON
ZIPH
CARMEL
JUTTAH
MAON
RIMMON
GERAR
ARAD
BEERSHEBA
HAZAR-SHUAL
MOLADAH
BEPED
ZIKLAG
TAMAR
DEHOBOTH
ZEPHATH OR HORMAH
Desert of Shur
Desert of Paran
The Wilderness of Judah
SEA OF THE PLAIN OR SALT SEA
CITY OF SALT
R. ARNON
DIBON
AROER
MOAB
KIR-MOAB
BOZRAH
THE GREAT SEA
Plain of Sharon
ARABIA

## STUDY XVII.

### Elijah, the Religious Reformer (1 Kings 17—2 Kings 2).

*1st Day: Elijah, the Champion of Jehovah.*

Read 1 Kings 17—18.

1. Elijah was the Martin Luther of the Hebrews. He carries us back to the reign of Ahab, in whose time culminated the growing antagonism of the previous century between prophet and king. Ahab married a foreign princess named Jezebel, who not only introduced the worship of Baal, but inaugurated the first great religious persecution of the Church, cutting off the prophets of Jehovah and destroying His altars. See 1 Kings 18:4, 13. Ahab made no effort to oppose her.

2. It was in such a crisis that Elijah was raised up, "the very chief of prophets, the loftiest and sternest spirit of the true faith that ever withstood the proud spirit of Asiatic paganism" (Stanley). Coming forth suddenly from the wilds of Gilead, he announced himself to Ahab. Austere and ascetic, he brought with him the strong monotheistic spirit of the desert. "The strongest trees are found not in sheltered nooks, but in the most exposed places where sweeps the fury of the storm: so God's grandest heroes" (Taylor).

3. He came to save his country from a mixture of Baal and Jehovah-worship. The worship of Baal had already become the court religion, and Elijah saw that if its progress were not effectually checked it would soon become the national religion. His chief message, therefore, to Ahab was that Jehovah was a jealous God, who de-

manded the exclusive worship of His people. Israel must make an absolute choice between Him and Baal. The want of dew and rain would be a proof of Jehovah's displeasure at the religious corruption which had grown up. See 1 Kings 17:1.

4. Three years of drought and famine pass, during which Elijah has been most wonderfully preserved, and Ahab has had time for reflection. Elijah announces himself a second time and demands a contest between Jehovah and Baal. The king feels compelled to consent. The unique drama on Carmel follows. Baal is silent: Jehovah answers by fire.

Of what permanent value is Elijah's contention in 1 Kings 18:21?

*2d Day: Elijah, the Victim of Despondency.*

Read 1 Kings 19.

1. Like Athanasius, Elijah had stood on Carmel "against the world." And he fancied, when all the people shouted "Jehovah, he is God," that the battle for truth had been successfully terminated. But he soon learned that "truth is not impressed by lightning flashes," and that grand as the Carmel triumph had been, it was but the opening of a long prophetic campaign.

2. Ahab had been silenced, but Jezebel brooded vengeance for her arch-adversary. See 1 Kings 19:2. Elijah was not prepared for such a threat. "He was a man of impulse" (Matheson). He therefore fled, sad and disappointed. Physically exhausted, he wished to die. It was the crisis of his life. He had expected that those who cheered on Carmel would rally round him at Jezreel. But alas! when his life was in jeopardy not one raised his voice in protest. He therefore becomes despondent, and journeys all the way to Horeb to make complaint to the God of Moses.

3. The narrative in 1 Kings 19:11-18 is "spiritually one

of the profoundest in the Old Testament. It is a magnificent parable, intended to teach Elijah that a prophet of Jehovah must cultivate grace and mercy. Elijah had used the weapon of force, and had failed. Jehovah makes experiment upon Elijah with his own weapon. He visits the mountain with a hurricane, with an earthquake, and with a fire. The prophet's wounded spirit is not moved by any of these. Jehovah is not in them. But in the calm which follows the tumult he hears a still, small voice, 'a sound of gentle stillness,' which thrills his inmost being; he feels that God is there; he wraps his face in his mantle and waits to receive the divine communication. He is thus taught the meaning of his failure. In the heart of Sinai he learns the gentleness of God" (Strachan).

4. Thus Elijah is lifted out of his despondency, and is given the true programme of prophecy: namely, that love, not force, must win. Jehovah also opens his jaundiced eyes to see that the religious condition of Israel is not really as bad as he had supposed, and sends him home with a threefold commission.

What recipe is given for despondency in Psalm 42:5?

*3d Day: Elijah, the Defender of Civil Rights.*

Read 1 Kings 21.

1. During a period of three years, Ahab warred successfully with Benhadad, king of Damascus, vindicating his reply to the Syrian king, "Let not him that girdeth on his armor boast himself as he that putteth it off." See 1 Kings 20:11. Perhaps as the result of these signal victories, Ahab became more arbitrary and avaricious.

2. In the city of Jezreel, where Ahab had his ivory summer palace, there lived a man named Naboth, whose vineyard lay contiguous to Ahab's park. Desiring to possess the vineyard, the king offered to purchase it; but Naboth, on legal grounds, declined to part with his patrimony. Look up Numbers 36:7. Ahab, like a spoiled boy, became

"heavy and displeased," as he had been on a previous occasion. See 1 Kings 20:43.

3. But the "Lady Macbeth" of his palace "cared nothing for the scruples which tormented the conscience even of the worst of the kings of Israel" (Stanley). Knowing that the property of those condemned for blasphemy reverted to the crown, she took the royal seal, wrote letters to the elders of Israel, secured false witnesses, and had Naboth and his sons condemned and stoned to death.

4. When Ahab learned of her crime, he betrayed no feeling of disapproval (though his own conscience would not have allowed him to commit such an awful deed himself), but arose from his bed, ordered his chariot, summoned Jehu and Bidkar, the head officers of his army, to accompany him, and drove down from Samaria to Jezreel to take possession of the vineyard which, by confiscation, had become his.

5. By divine direction, Elijah met him on one of the terraces of his bloodstained property. Mindful of the lesson which had been taught him at Horeb, he did not resort to force, though his message is one of sharp rebuke. In the cause of justice and humanity, Elijah's moral indignation flashed out with thunderbolts of doom. He defended the civil rights of the people. As a result, the prophet and the king parted to meet no more. But Jehu, who stood by, remembered the prophet's message for twenty years. See 2 Kings 9:25.

Ahab worshipped Baal, and was tyrannical; Elijah worshipped Jehovah, and was the champion of civil rights. What practical conclusion is obvious?

*4th Day: His Jealousy for Jehovah.*

Read 2 Kings 1.

1. Elijah's ruling passion was jealousy for Jehovah. When the Lord asked him on Mount Sinai, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" he replied, "I have been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of Hosts." See 1 Kings 19:10, 14.

2. The same passion seized him when Ahaziah sent messengers to inquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron, whether he should recover from his sickness, and Elijah intercepted them with the prophetic inquiry, "Is it because there is no God in Israel that thou sendest to inquire of Baalzebub (the god of flies)?" For it was sufficiently evident to Elijah that the king had forsaken Jehovah.

3. The messengers are bidden to return and tell the king that his injuries will certainly prove fatal. "Instead of turning in penitence to Jehovah, Ahaziah turns in fury against the prophet" (Taylor). He tries to silence him. Twice he sends a band of fifty men to capture him. But at Elijah's word fire descends and consumes them all. The third company are not so peremptory, and he accompanies them to the king's bedchamber, where he repeats to the king his former message of hopelessness and doom: "Thou shalt surely die." See 2 Kings 1:16.

4. Elijah, however, has again resorted to force. His spirit is vindictive. But the cause of his severity is his jealousy for Jehovah. To Elijah "there could be no alliance between the God of Israel and any other divinity." Jehovah could have no rival.

5. Some deny that Elijah was a monotheist, or a believer in one only God; claiming that he was little better than the mass of the people in his time, who fancied that each nation had its own local deity: in other words, that Elijah was a "henotheist," or a believer in one god for each nation. So Wellhausen, Stade, Guthe and others. "But Elijah's conception of Jehovah virtually excludes all other objects of worship. It is difficult to believe that the gods, whom he treats with such irony and contempt, had, to his mind, any reality. At any rate, it is but a short step from Elijah's 'henotheism' to absolute monotheism" (Strachan).

Is Elijah's vindictive spirit to be commended in the light of Luke 9:54, 55?

*5th Day: Elijah's Translation.*

Read 2 Kings 2.

1. At Horeb, Elijah had been given the threefold commission of anointing Hazael to be king over Syria, Jehu to be king over Israel, and Elisha to be his successor. These three were destined to become the instruments of divine judgment on Baal. Elijah performed the last only, but he transmitted to Elisha the execution of the other two. See 1 Kings 19:19-21.

2. Elisha was found plowing when Elijah cast his mantle upon him. Knowing the significance of this symbolic act, Elisha straightway left his plowing and became Elijah's servant. For six or seven years they were associated together as teacher and disciple (cf. 1 Kings 22:1, with 2 Kings 1:17). Towards the close of his career, Elijah seems to have had much to do with the so-called schools of the prophets, as the superintendent, so to speak, of theological education.

3. At last the time came when Elijah must be taken away. His end was even more mysterious than his beginning. Like Enoch, he was "translated that he should not see death" (cf. Hebs. 11:5); and, like Christ, he was carried up "into heaven" (cf. Luke 24:51). This memorable event probably happened just before Jehoram of Israel ascended the throne (cf. 2 Kings 1:17, 2:1, 3:1).

4. When the summons came, Elijah appears to have been residing at Gilgal, between Bethel and Shechem. For some inscrutable reason, he betakes himself to the region where Moses died, visiting the guilds of the prophets at Bethel and Jericho on his way. Once and again he beseeches his disciple to return, but Elisha clings to his master, and begs a first-born's blessing. Compare 2 Kings 2:9 with Deut. 21:17.

5. Crossing the Jordan they come into Moab. Black clouds gather, a chariot and horses of fire appear, and

Elijah is seen no more. His mantle falls upon the gazing disciple. Elijah's work is finished; Elisha's begins. Hazael and Jehu are still to be anointed, but enough has been done to make Elijah's spirit live among the people. "There is never again any question of rivalry between Jehovah and Baal; nor any danger more of Baal-worship becoming the national religion" (Strachan).

Look up 1 Kings 17:1, 18:15 for the secret of Elijah's heroism.

*6th Day: Elijah and Elisha.*

Glance over 2 Kings 3—9.

1. "Elisha was, in many respects, the opposite of his illustrious master; in disposition he was apparently gentler, more tender and sympathetic" (Geikie). Spiritually, they closely resembled each other. Occasionally, both were stern and harsh in their treatment of the offending. Both lived in degenerate times; both worked miracles; both restored a young son to life (cf. 1 Kings 17:17-24, 2 Kings 4:32-37); both multiplied the limited provisions of a widow (cf. 1 Kings 17:8-16, 2 Kings 4:1-7); both were spiritual "fathers" to the sons of the prophets; and both aimed to reform the religion of their people.

2. On the other hand, the contrasts between them are far more striking. Elijah was a typical prophet; Elisha was more of a wonder-worker. Elijah wore a rough mantle; Elisha, the ordinary garments of a civilian. Elijah was distinguished for his flowing locks; Elisha, for a head which was bald. Elijah was a son of the desert; Elisha is usually found in the city. Elijah heard "a sound of gentle stillness" in the desert mountain; Elisha felt the hand of Jehovah upon him when "a minstrel" played. Elijah's career was comparatively brief; Elisha's extended over a period of some sixty years. Elijah came into conflict with kings; Elisha was their counsellor and friend.

3. Both were great, each exceeding the other in great-

ness. Jewish tradition praises especially the work and character of Elijah. Jesus ben Sirach lauds him (cf. Ecclus, 48:1 ff.); Malachi predicts his reappearance (cf. Mal. 4:5); Jesus sees him in John the Baptist (cf. Matt. 17:11, 12); and he and Moses converse together on the Mount of Transfiguration (cf. Matt. 17:3). No other prophet, indeed, is mentioned as often in the New Testament as Elijah.

Elisha is called "the man of God" twenty-nine times; was Elijah ever given this title?

*7th Day: The Second Century of Schism* (842-740 B. C.).

Glance through 2 Kings 10—14; cf. 2 Chron. 23—26.

1. Catching up the thread of Israel's history at the point to which we briefly sketched it in the preceding Study, we turn our attention first to Jehu and his dynasty. (1) *Jehu* overthrew "the house of Omri," completing, to this extent, the reformation begun by Elijah. But according to the "Black Obelisk" of Shalmanezer II., Jehu paid tribute to Assyria. (2) *Jehoahaz* was weak; Syria reduced Israel to a condition of subserviency. "The reign of Jehu and of his son Jehoahaz is the most miserable period that Israel ever experienced" (Cornill). See 2 Kings 13:3. (3) *Jehoash* revived Israel's strength, recovering the cities east of the Jordan, which Jehoahaz had lost. Yet, according to the monuments, he, too, paid tribute to Assyria. (4) *Jeroboam II.* was the most powerful of all the nineteen monarchs who sat upon the throne of Israel. He restored the border of his kingdom from Hamath to the Dead Sea, as Jonah had predicted (look up 2 Kings 14:25); yet "the light which Jeroboam caused once more to illumine Israel was only the glow of evening, a last flickering of the dying taper" (Cornill). Amos and Hosea prophesied in his reign. (See page 157).

(5) *Zechariah,* the last king of Jehu's dynasty, was murdered after a brief reign of six months.

2. Turning to Judah, during this same period, four rulers sat upon the throne of David. (1) *Athaliah,* the daughter of Ahab, in order to seize the crown, murdered all of her grandchildren except Joash; and, "if she could have had her way, the house of David would have perished from the earth." (2) *Jehoash* (or Joash) was made king in her place, as the result of a revolution organized by the priest Jehoiada. Under Jehoiada's influence, Jehoash reformed the worship and repaired the Temple. Toward the close of his reign, however, Hazael of Damascus exacted from him large presents. (3) *Amaziah's* first act was to execute the murderers of his father. He recaptured Edom, but was deeply humiliated by Jehoash of Israel; the walls of Jerusalem were dismantled. (4) *Uzziah* (or Azariah) recovered Elath, a port on the Red Sea, fought successfully with the Philistines, received presents from the Ammonites and strengthened the fortifications of Jerusalem. In the last year of his reign, Isaiah was called to be prophet.

3. In general, it may be said that, at the middle of the eighth century B. C., both Israel and Judah were materially prosperous and flourishing, but that, socially and religiously, their condition was anything but satisfactory.

Did Elijah ever attempt to warn Judah? See 2 Chron. 21:12 ff.

## STUDY XVIII.

### Isaiah, the King of Prophets (2 Kings 15—21; cf. 2 Chron. 27—33).

*1st Day: The Call of Isaiah* (ca. 740 B. C.).

Read Isaiah 6.

1. Four great prophets are known to have lived and labored during the eighth century B. C.; Amos and Hosea in Israel, Isaiah and Micah in Judah. Isaiah was the greatest. The minimum period of his ministry was forty years (740-701 B. C.).

2. Till his time, the kingdoms of Israel and Judah had escaped serious attack from any really formidable power. Now, however, Assyria was making herself felt in Western Asia—a power which was destined to shape the fortunes of both countries. The Assyrians have been called the Romans of Asia.

3. Four great crises mark the period of Isaiah's active ministry: (1) the Syro-Ephraimitic war of 735-2; (2) the captivity of the Ten Tribes in 722; (3) the siege of Ashdod in 711; and (4) the invasion of Sennacherib in 701. (See page 172). No period in the history of Judah was more critical. There was danger from without, and intrigues of opposing factions within. A wise man was needed at the tiller of the ship of state. That man was Isaiah, the king of prophets, and the greatest statesman of his age. He was a keen discerner of national issues; his horizon was world-wide. He was the first to unfold Jehovah's plan for the nations.

4. In the year that King Uzziah died, Isaiah was called to the prophetic office. He saw a triple vision—(a) of Je-

hovah as holy, (b) of himself as sinful, and (c) of grace and forgiveness. Following this he heard a voice inquiring, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Isaiah answered, "Here am I; send me," and Jehovah gave him a commission of judgment and mercy to the effect that the nation must perish, but a "holy seed" should be saved. Isaiah never forgot the promise that a "remnant" should be saved. "The vision bears the impress of that grandeur of imagination which is the distinctive mark of his genius" (Driver).

Can you think of any reason why the account of Isaiah's call should immediately follow the threats in chapter 5?

*2d Day: The Syro-Ephraimitic War* (735-2 B. C.).

Read Isa. 7—8, and 2 Kings 16.

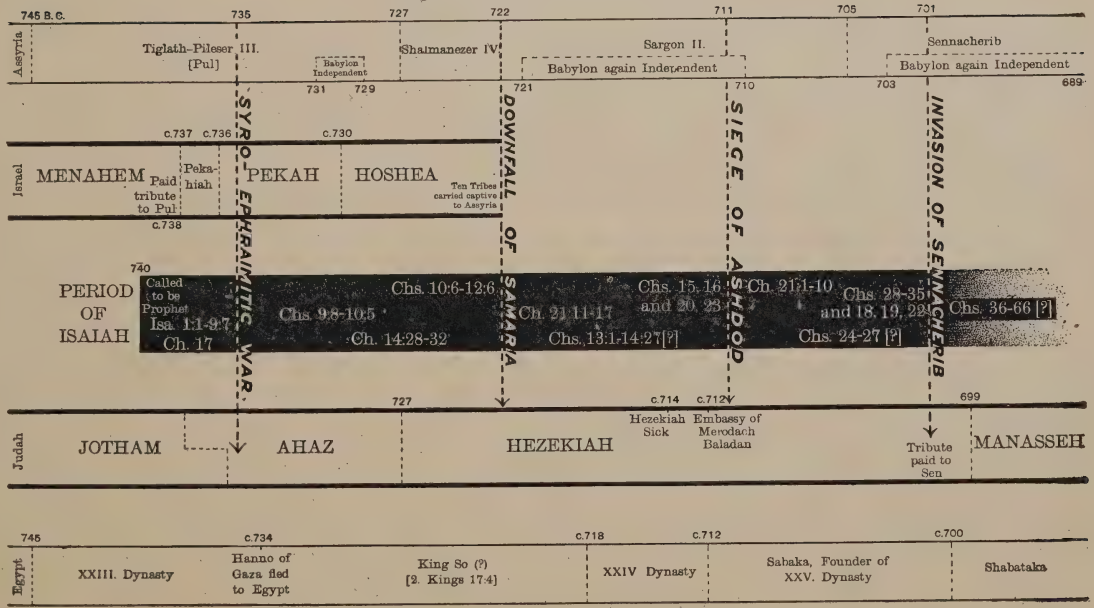
1. The first of the four great political crises of Isaiah's time was the Syro-Ephraimitic war. In the year 735, Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Damascus made a conspiracy against Ahaz, King of Judah, to depose him and place upon the throne of Jerusalem a "good-for-nothing" son of Tabeel, who would ally himself with them against Assyria.

2. Ahaz persistently refused to enter their league, and began to prepare for a siege. But he was not the man to meet successfully such a crisis. After the example of Menahem, king of Israel, he appealed for protection to Tiglath-pileser III., king of Assyria. Isaiah was divinely charged to remonstrate with the young king and show him the folly of his short-sighted policy. Assyria, the prophet insisted, would first help and then devour. The occasion evoked one of Isaiah's most famous prophecies.

3. Taking with him his son, Shear-jashub, whose very name, "a remnant shall return," conveyed a prophecy, Isaiah approached the king and delivered his message: "Fear not . . . because of these two tails of smoking

# THE PERIOD OF ISAIAH

Showing the four Great Political Crises of his time.



firebrands" (Syria and Israel), half-burnt off and wholly burnt out, mere smoking fag-ends of wood-pokers; for within sixty-five years Ephraim (i. e., Israel) shall be broken in pieces that it be not a people. And then, with a clever play upon words, he adds: "If Judah does not *hold fast* (to his God), he will lose his *fast hold* (of country)." See Isa. 7:9.

4. In vain, however, Isaiah attempted to dissuade the infatuated king from his suicidal policy of leaning upon an arm of flesh. Ahaz would not listen. He even refused to ask a sign at the prophet's solicitation, whereupon Isaiah delivered his famous "Immanuel" prophecy (cf. Isa. 7:14)—"the unpremeditated creation of his inspired imagination," in which he points to "the Messianic king, whose portrait is here for the first time in the Old Testament sketched distinctly" (Driver).

5. Tiglath-pileser, of course, gladly consented to Ahaz's invitation. "He had long been looking for an opportunity to interfere in the West, and this was afforded by the Jewish king" (Sayce). He moved westward, besieged Damascus, and, in 732 B. C., captured it; at the same time he also stripped Israel of all her possessions north of Mount Carmel and east of the Jordan. This brought the Syro-Ephraimitic invasion to an end. Judah herself barely escaped.

Note in Isa. 8:12, 13 the prophet's definition of a "conspiracy." All depends upon which side Jehovah is.

*3d Day: The Downfall of Samaria* (722 B. C.).

Read 2 Kings 17.

1. The second great catastrophe in Isaiah's ministry was the downfall of Samaria and the captivity of the Ten Tribes. For Shalmanezer IV., king of Assyria, came up against Hoshea, the last king of Israel, and besieged Samaria three years. He died, however, before the city actually surrendered. Sargon, his commander-in-chief,

seized the throne, obtained recognition from the army, completed the siege, and carried into captivity, according to his own inscription, 27,280 of Samaria's choicest inhabitants. Both of these kings are mentioned anonymously, in 2 Kings 17:5, 6.

2. The immediate cause of Samaria's downfall is not far to seek. Encouraged by Sabako, founder of the twenty-fifth dynasty in Egypt, Hoshea had refused longer to pay the heavy tribute which Assyria exacted from him. See 2 Kings 17:4. Indeed, a new party had now arisen in Israel, which rested its hopes on Egypt.

3. Meanwhile, in the far East, Merodach-baladan, "the Babylonian patriot," mindful of the former greatness of his kingdom, again openly threw off his allegiance to Assyria, and succeeded in maintaining the independence of Babylonia for about eleven years. (See page 172).

4. In Judah, Hezekiah had already ascended the throne. Though weak, he was a much better ruler than Ahaz. He improved the water supply of Jerusalem, cutting a tunnel from Gihon to the Pool of Siloam. See Plan of Jerusalem. He cared for the military interests and financial resources of the kingdom, subdued the Philistines (cf. 2 Kings 18:8)—the only warlike enterprise related of him—encouraged agriculture, and patronized literature. See Prov. 25:1, Isa. 38:9-20.

5. He was also devoted to Jehovah; and very early in his reign reformed the religion of his people, restoring the Temple, removing the high places, overturning the obelisks and images, and destroying the brazen serpent of Moses, which had become an object of veneration. See 2 Kings 18:4; 2 Chron. 29:3, 31:1. "The reforms of Hezekiah gave practical effect to Isaiah's preaching" (Sayce).

How would the captivity of Israel naturally affect Judah?

*4th Day: The Siege of Ashdod* (711 B. C.).

Scan Isa. 20, 38 and 39; cf. 2 Kings 20.

1. The third great crisis of Isaiah's period was the siege of Ashdod. Azuri, its king, following the example of Hoshea in depending upon Egypt for protection, refused to pay his accustomed tribute to Assyria. Whereupon Sargon sent his "Tartan," or general-in-chief, who besieged Ashdod, and carried its inhabitants into captivity. See Isa. 20:1.

2. Just prior to the siege (ca. 713 B. C.) Hezekiah had been very ill. When he recovered, Merodach-baladan sent an embassy, ostensibly to congratulate him, but his real aim doubtless was to persuade the Judean king to join in a plot against Assyria. Hezekiah, elated, foolishly showed all his royal treasures to the Babylonian ambassadors, forgetting that the sight of such vast riches would excite their cupidity. See Isa. 39.

3. But no actual breach between Hezekiah and Sargon took place at this time; "Sargon's troops before Ashdod probably intimidated Judah, and the Assyrian king may have demanded fresh proof of Hezekiah's allegiance" (Driver). Between Assyria on the one side and Egypt on the other, the little kingdom of Judah remained in a semi-independent state. Not long after, however, Judah became implicated in treasonable negotiations with Egypt; but the Egyptian party in Jerusalem was not yet powerful enough to carry the king with it.

4. Isaiah was steadfastly opposed to a rupture with Assyria. Though averse to the original application of Ahaz to Assyria for help, now that the false step was taken, he advised loyalty to their foreign suzerain. Particularly was he opposed to the policy of relying upon Egypt. The folly of such a course he emphasized by means of a singular symbolic act: for three years he preached through the streets of Jerusalem in a captive's garb. See Isa. 20.

Two others in the Old Testament are said to have stripped off their clothes in order to prophesy. See 1 Sam. 19:24, Micah 1:8.

*5th Day: The Invasion of Sennacherib* (701 B. C.).

Compare Isa. 36—37 with 2 Kings 18:13—19:37.

1. The most serious crisis in Isaiah's ministry was the invasion of 701 B. C., when, according to the so-called "Taylor Cylinder" of Sennacherib, the Assyrian king took forty-six of Judah's strong cities and fortresses, small towns without number, captured 200,150 of her inhabitants, besieged Jerusalem, shutting up Hezekiah in his royal city, "like a bird in a cage," and exacted from him an annual tribute equivalent to a million and a quarter of dollars.

2. Hezekiah was almost ready to surrender (cf. Isa. 37:1 ff.), but Isaiah, like a true statesman—like Aristides in the great crisis of Athenian history—ignored party interests and "contemplated only national interests and the national existence." He boldly announced that Sennacherib had essayed a task which he was unable to complete, and that his enterprise would issue in failure.

3. "The crisis was a real one. Resistance to Sennacherib must have seemed desperate. The chances, humanly speaking, were incalculably against Jerusalem. The agony and despair of the populace could have known no limit. The fate of the city must have appeared sealed. But Isaiah never wavered. Hope still remained for the remnant of Judah. That night the long series (cf. Isa. 29—32) of Isaiah's predictions received fulfilment: the flower of the Assyrians was cut off; and the Assyrian monarch 'heard the rumor,' which impelled his return to his own land. Sennacherib himself does not even claim to have captured Jerusalem" (Driver). See Isa. 37:36-38.

4. A knotty point in the chronology of this period is that connected with 2 Kings 18:14-16, a section which is

omitted after verse one of the parallel account in Isa. 36. The best explanation, in view of all the facts, seems to be that the historian in Kings, having compiled his record from various ancient sources, groups all the important invasions of Sennacherib under the one caption, "Now in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah" (cf. 2 Kings 18:13), thus obliterating the different *stages* of Sennacherib's movements in the West.

Would not the message of "comfort" in Isa. 40 ff. be applicable to Judah and Jerusalem after such a series of crises?

*6th Day: Isaiah's Character and Influence.*

Review Isa. 7—8 and 36—39.

1. "Isaiah is unquestionably the most perfect example of a Hebrew prophet, for in him every side of the prophetic activity was fully developed. While Micah and Amos were concerned chiefly with social questions, and Hosea with morals and religion, Isaiah spoke with authority on all these themes" (Kent).

2. As a *statesman,* amid all the vicissitudes of his unsettled age, he remained firm in principle, and steadfast in purpose to the end. The great crisis of 701 would probably have never arisen had Isaiah's counsels been heeded, and had Judah not leaned on Egypt for support. Isaiah realized, in anticipation, Demosthenes' ideal of a statesman: "to discern events in their beginnings, to be beforehand in the detection of movements and tendencies, and to forewarn his countrymen accordingly; to fight against political vices, from which no state is free, of procrastination, supineness, ignorance and party jealousy; to impress upon all the paramount importance of unity and friendly feeling, and the duty of providing promptly for their country's needs." This was Isaiah's ideal.

3. "As a *reformer,* Isaiah labored to correct all political and social abuses, to elevate statesmanship, to purify jus-

tice, to reform religion, to fight against inconsistency and to redress social wrongs. No rank escaped his censure" (Driver). The reformation of Hezekiah (cf. 2 Kings 18:1-6) was not the only product of his labors. His whole life was a perpetual conflict with the dominant tendencies of his age.

4. As a *theologian,* he emphasized more than any other prophet the majesty and holiness of Jehovah. See Isa. 2:10, 5:16. He made no formal polemic against idols, yet he regarded them as nonentities, and utterly condemned all forms of merely ritual worship. His most characteristic doctrine is that of judgment, with its accompanying correlative, that a "remnant" shall return, be purged and enjoy a blissful future under the beneficent rule of an Ideal King, in whose day Israel's salvation will extend to the Gentiles. See Isa. 2:2-4.

What as to the need of modern prophets like Isaiah?

*7th Day: Résumé of the History* (740-640 B. C.).

Review 2 Kings 15—21.

1. Founded by usurpation, the history of *Israel* is the history of a line of usurpers. During the first century (940-842) there were four different dynasties (see Study XVI); the second century (842-740) covered the period of Jehu's house (see Study XVII); while during the brief period from 740 to 722 there were four new dynasties. Military violence ruled. "The government of Samaria became the prey of the strongest or most popular commander" (Sayce).

2. The chronology of the period is especially difficult. Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah and Hoshea succeeded each other in rapid succession. Finally, Samaria fell and the strongest of the nation were carried captives to Assyria. Those who remained behind either fled for refuge to Judah, or were absorbed by the heathen inhabitants of the new Assyrian province. See 2 Kings 17:24-41.

3. In *Judah,* on the other hand, an unbroken line of Davidic princes sat upon the throne of Jerusalem, with "one capital, one temple, and one recognized form of faith" (Sayce). It is extravagant to claim, with Cornill, that "prophecy is an exclusive growth of North Israel," and that Judah, not Israel, rebelled. The view which regards the Ten Tribes as "rebels and heretics" is in keeping with the unanimous opinion of the prophets, and cannot so easily be set aside as "unhistorical."

4. Yet Judah was far from ideal, either in religion or politics. Jotham and Ahaz were both weak and wicked. Hezekiah was stronger, but even he would probably not have been able to withstand the encroachments of his foes had not Isaiah been his constant counselor. With the downfall of Damascus (732) and Samaria (722), Judah stood exposed to Assyria's direct attack. Jerusalem maintained her independence, however, as long as Hezekiah ruled, but Manasseh was thrown into chains and carried to Babylon. See 2 Chron. 33:11-13. The monuments of Esarhaddon and Asshurbanipal indirectly confirm this statement of the Chronicler. Amon, who succeeded Manasseh, was the wicked son of a bad father.

By means of the diagrams (pages 157, 172), endeavor to synchronize the principal kings of Israel and Judah.

## STUDY XIX.

### Jeremiah, "the Prophet of Failure" (2 Kings 22—25; cf. 2 Chron. 34—36).

*1st Day: Jeremiah, and the Newly Discovered Law-Book.*

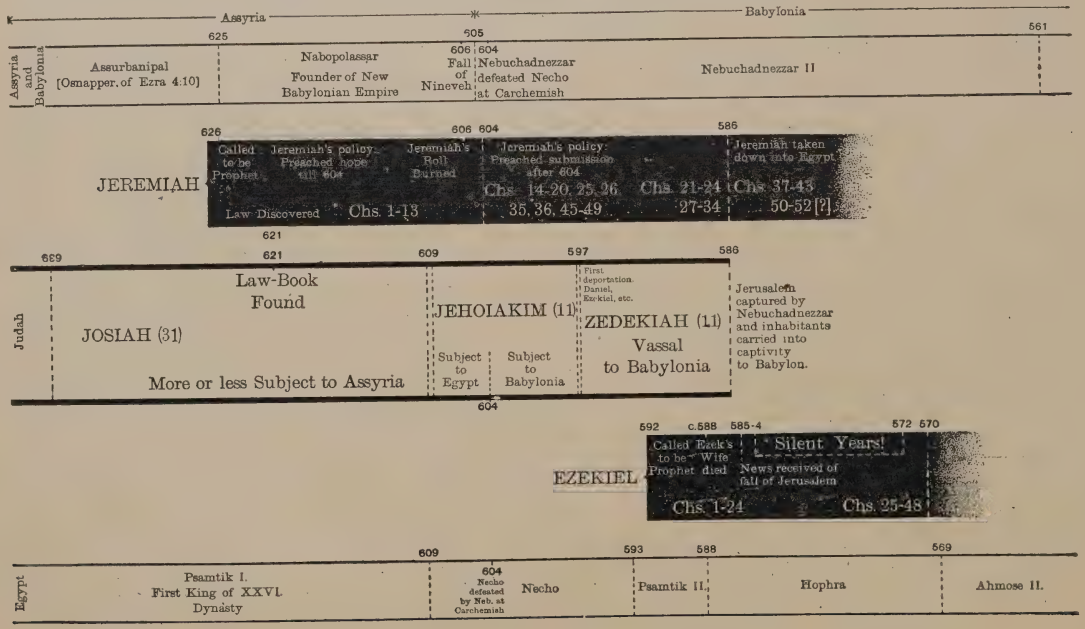
Read 2 Kings 22; cf. 2 Chron. 34.

1. Jeremiah was a prophet of failure, but only in the same sense that the Holy Spirit sometimes labors in vain. He was the last of Judah's prophet-statesmen. For forty years he watched the decline and fall of the beautiful capital of his nation; having as his royal contemporaries Josiah, Jehoahaz (who, after a reign of three months, was carried captive to Egypt by Pharaoh Necho), Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin (who, after a reign of three months, was carried captive to Babylonia by Nebuchadnezzar) and Zedekiah. See diagram.

2. In the early part of his period Assyria was tottering to its fall. Cyaxares, king of the Medes, and Nabopolassar, king of the Chaldeans, combined in an assault upon Nineveh and took it (606 B. C.). "The whole history of the world shows no catastrophe so complete as the destruction of the Assyrian Empire—a just retribution for the abominations which it had perpetrated for centuries" (Cornill).

3. Meanwhile, in Jerusalem a notable discovery was made, "The Book of the Law" was found in the temple by Hilkah, the priest, being recognized at once as an ancient law-book (cf. 2 Kings 22:13). Shaphan, the scribe, first read it, and then took it to Josiah and read it in turn to him; whereupon the king rent his clothes and sought to know the divine will as to what he should do to avert Jehovah's wrath.

# PERIOD OF JEREMIAH AND EZEKIEL



4. How much of our present Pentateuch the newly discovered Book of the Law really contained is a matter of keen dispute among Old Testament specialists. But it is generally agreed that it included at least the laws of Deuteronomy; it may have contained also much other material. What is especially important is the fact that it was recognized both by Josiah and Huldah, the prophetess, as an *ancient* codex.

Who, in more modern times, rediscovered the Bible in the cloister at Erfurt?

*2d Day: Jeremiah, and the Reformation of Josiah.*

Read 2 Kings 23; cf. 2 Chron. 35.

1. From the very beginning of his reign, Josiah took an active interest in the Temple and the Temple-worship. According to the Chronicler, he began, *prior* to the discovery of the Law-Book, to repair the sacred edifice and purify the religious practices of the people. See 2 Chron. 34:1-7. This is doubtless historically true; yet it must be allowed that his more iconoclastic reforms were made on the basis of the newly discovered codex.

2. Having summoned the elders of Judah and Jerusalem, he read before them and the people all the words of the Book of the Law, and together they made a covenant with Jehovah to keep His commandments to perform them, whereupon the Temple was purged, the idolatrous priests were ejected from office, the high places were destroyed, and Tophet defiled.

3. Josiah extended his reform even into the ancient territory of Israel, defiling also Jeroboam's altar at Bethel by burning on it bones taken from the adjoining sepulchres (cf. 1 Kings 13:2), and rooting out pagan worship everywhere. He also observed so elaborately the Passover feast seven days that his ritual eclipsed in splendor all the other celebrations from Samuel down to the Chronicler. See 2 Chron. 35:18.

4. But Josiah's reformation was obviously drastic and sanguinary, and therefore had but little permanent effect upon the nation. Stanley speaks of it as "the first direct persecution that the kingdom of Judah had witnessed on behalf of True Religion." In the historical books much space is given to it, but by the contemporary prophets it is never mentioned at all. "Jeremiah had never been greatly edified by Josiah's reforms, and cherished no illusions in regard to them" (Davidson). It was an attempt, he said, to work the old field, rank with thorns. They must have new ground. "Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns" (Jer. 4:3). Josiah's revival was but momentary; it came too late.

Of what value too often are religious reforms, whether national or individual, when instigated by *fear,* or late in life?

*3d Day: The First Edition of Jeremiah's "Roll" Burned* (ca. 603 B. C.).

Read Jer. 36.

1. Josiah's sudden and uncalled-for death at Megiddo, when he ventured to prevent Pharaoh Necho from crossing his territory to attack Nebuchadnezzar, threw the people into deep mourning. Jeremiah celebrated the sad calamity with special lamentation. See 2 Chron. 35:25.

2. Jehoahaz was chosen to succeed his father; but Necho summoned him, after a brief reign of three months, to Riblah on the Orontes, threw him into fetters and carried him to Egypt, where he died (cf. 2 Kings 23:33, 34). The fate of the young prince deeply affected the people. His older brother was then set upon the throne by Necho, and his name changed to Jehoiakim.

3. Jehoiakim was a bad ruler. Besides, the national life of Judah was about exhausted. Religiously, the people were confused. Two conceptions of Jehovah prevailed, and two ways of serving Him. The princes and politicians

were all against Jeremiah. Jehoiakim was likewise ill-disposed toward him. In the year 606 B. C., Nebuchadnezzar defeated Necho at Carchemish. To Judah this was a cause of alarm; to Jeremiah it was the first knell of Jerusalem's captivity. "Like a flash of lightning in the darkness, it lighted up to him the whole line of God's purposes with His people to the end" (Davidson). "By Carchemish, Jehoiakim was transformed from an Egyptian vassal into a Babylonian" (Cornill). (See page 181).

4. Calling Baruch to him, Jeremiah dictated an outline of all that he had spoken from the beginning of his ministry. The roll was read first by Baruch in the temple, publicly, and later by Jehudi to the king, privately, as he was sitting in his winter-house before a burning brazier. The result was that the prophecies of twenty-three years were lost; for Jehoiakim burned them. But Jeremiah lost no time in dictating a second edition, revised and enlarged—the edition, indeed, which formed the basis of the text we now possess in the book of Jeremiah. Look up Jer. 36:32.

What famous modern historian lost all his valuable MSS.?

*4th Day: Judah's First Captivity* (597 B. C.).

Read 2 Kings 24.

1. "Jehoiakim was a ruler who would have brought even a strong state to the brink of ruin" (Davidson). Frivolous and superficial, despotic and brutal, he was greatly detested. For three years he observed his oath of allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar, at the end of which he refused to pay his annual tribute, trusting in Egypt to help him to maintain his independence. But Necho was soon obliged, probably by the petty nationalities round about Judah, to keep out of Palestine. See 2 Kings 24:7.

2. Jehoiakim died, and was succeeded by his youthful son of eighteen years, Jehoiachin, who ruled but three brief months; for Nebuchadnezzar came up against

Jerusalem and besieged the city and forced the king and his queen-mother, his servants, and the officers of his house to go into captivity to Babylon (597 B. C.). There Jehoiachin lay in prison thirty-seven years, till Evil-merodach, the successor of Nebuchadnezzar, released him. See 2 Kings 25:27-30.

3. Thus, again, the people were plunged into deep sorrow. "The nation reeled under the blow" (Stanley). From Jehoiachin's captivity, as from a decisive era, the subsequent years of the history were reckoned. Ezekiel, who shared Jehoiachin's captivity, regarded him as the last legitimate ruler of Judah (cf. Ezek. 19:14). The Judah that remained no more deserved the name. Only the miserable dregs were left. The choicest spirits were taken into exile. Ezekiel was among them, and possibly Daniel and his three companions, though they seem to have been brought to Babylon at an earlier period. See Dan. 1:1.

4. In the colony deported there were seven thousand, besides one thosand craftsmen and smiths; in all, ten thousand were carried away. See 2 Kings 24:14. To these melancholy captives Jeremiah addressed a letter of cheer and consolation. See Jer. 29:1-14.

Study the diagram, and master the chronology of the chief events in Jeremiah's period.

*5th Day: Jeremiah and the False Prophets.*

Read Jer. 28 and Ezek. 13.

1. False prophecy was one of the chief causes of Judah's downfall. Standing over against those who prophesied "lies" and saw "false visions," the figure of Jeremiah appears lonely and pathetic. And yet Jeremiah was not absolutely alone; for there were Zephaniah, Nahum and Habakkuk, and probably others, who were contemporaries. See diagram of Schism.

2. These false leaders seem to have been organized; for example, they say, "Come, and let us devise devices against

Jeremiah." See Jer. 18:18. Such a threat must have been most exasperating. Indeed, it called forth from Jeremiah the most powerful and passionate invective in all his prophecies. See Jer. 18:21-23. Ezekiel likewise indulges in caustic sarcasm concerning them, when he says: "When one buildeth up a wall, behold, they daub it with untempered mortar" (cf. Ezek. 13:10).

3. A most instructive contest once took place between Jeremiah and Hananiah in the Temple, the priests and people being judges. The question at issue was the duration of the Captivity. Jeremiah had said that it would last two generations; Hananiah predicted that within two years the exiles would return, with Jehoiachin at their head. Jeremiah was right; but the people, of course, sided with Hananiah, and Jeremiah was silenced. See Jer. 28. It is always easier to believe "smooth things."

4. The effect of such controversies was to confuse and perplex the people. An external criterion was wanting. The false prophets were optimistic; Jeremiah was sad. They preached peace; Jeremiah, punishment. They emphasized the power of Jehovah; Jeremiah, His moral being and righteousness. They stood on the moral level of the masses; Jeremiah was laboring to raise the masses to a higher plane. Their words did nothing to awaken conscience; Jeremiah was ever reminding them of their sins, and the inevitable retribution that awaited them. Time alone demonstrated the untruthfulness of their predictions. The cause of their blindness was their "inadequate conception of the *ethical* nature of Jehovah" (Davidson).

For a most graphic picture of how the people despised false prophets, look up Lams. 4:13-15. Apply the lesson to modern times.

*6th Day: The Beginning of the End.*

Read 2 Kings 25; cf. 2 Chron. 36.

1. Zedekiah was made, by Nebuchadnezzar, to succeed his uncle, Jehoiachin. But the task assigned him was pe-

culiarly difficult on account of the inferior character of the people who were left. "None remained save the poorest sort of the people in the land" (2 Kings 24:14). In temper, intellect, experience and religion, the people were immoderate, impulsive, and ill-instructed. See the parable of the two baskets of figs in Jer. 24. The remnant was hardly worth saving.

2. The principal steps in Jerusalem's final downfall were as follows:

(1) The king, after going in person to Babylon to swear allegiance to Nebuchanezzar (cf. Jer. 51:59), treacherously entered into league with the neighboring princes against him (cf. Jer. 27:3). Ezekiel regarded Zedekiah's violation of this oath as his crowning vice. See Ezek. 17:14, 18.

(2) Finally, weak and irresolute, and against the advice of the prophet, Zedekiah openly revolted against Babylonia, depending upon Egypt to help in case of need.

(3) Nebuchadnezzar immediately planned a new invasion of the country. For a moment he stood at the parting of the ways, hesitating whether to attack first Rabbath-ammon or Jerusalem (cf. Ezek. 21:21); but "all the omens pointed to Jerusalem, and to Jerusalem he came" (Stanley).

(4) A little later Judah's fair capital was blockaded, siege was begun, and all the petty neighboring states turned against her. The siege lasted eighteen months.

(5) Shortly after the blockade began, Pharaoh Hophra appeared and the Chaldeans raised the siege. For once Egypt redeemed her pledge. The jubilation within the city was great. Against Jeremiah's protests, the slaves, who had been emancipated, were again enslaved. See Jer. 34:17-22.

(6) The Egyptians were defeated and the siege resumed. Some fled; others flocked to the city for refuge. See Ezek. 34:12.

For further details of the siege, study those portions of Jeremiah and Ezekiel which were written about 586 B. C. See diagram (page 181).

*7th Day: Jeremiah and the Final Capture of Jerusalem* (586 B. C.).

Review 2 Kings 25, and 2 Chron. 36.

1. "Even during the siege, Jeremiah was the centre of interest" (Stanley). Attempting to escape to his own village of Anathoth, he was arrested, beaten and thrown into a dungeon. Zedekiah secretly removed him to the court of the prison attached to the palace (cf. Jer. 37:16-21); but the princes insisted that he should be kept in a place of greater security, and they took him and let him down into a deep, slimy well belonging to one of his most determined enemies. He was rescued, however, from this pit, through the intervention of an Ethiopian servant, Ebed-melech, and brought back to the state prison, where he remained secluded during the rest of the siege. See Jer. 38. About this time Jeremiah purchased from his cousin, Hanamel, the ancestral plot of ground at Anathoth; a deed which showed a noble confidence in Judah's return to Palestine. See Jer. 32:1-15.

2. The siege continued, and an enemy more formidable even than the Babylonians now appeared—famine. Occasional sallies were made by the inhabitants to obtain provisions, but without avail (cf. Lams. 5:9). Women devoured their new-born babes, and fathers ate the flesh of their sons and daughters (cf. Ezek. 5:10). "Reason gave way under the tension, and frenzied fanatics filled the city with murder" (Davidson).

3. At last a breach was made in the northern wall. Zedekiah, seeing that resistance was no longer possible, escaped, but was overtaken at Jericho, and carried to Riblah, where, before his presence, his sons were slain, and his

own eyes put out. He was then cast into fetters and carried to Babylon.

4. To complete the drama, Nebuzaradan, at the command of Nebuchadnezzar, burnt the Temple, carrying away the sacred vessels and the remaining inhabitants of any value. Over the miserable remnant still left, Gedeliah was appointed as governor; but he was soon treacherously murdered by Ishmael. This cut off the last vestige of hope for the nation to remain in Palestine. Accordingly, as a colony, they decided, contrary to Jeremiah's advice, to migrate to Egypt, taking Jeremiah with them. At this point the patient, sorrowing "prophet of failure" passes beyond the horizon of history. Whether he was stoned to death in Egypt, or made his escape to Babylon, it is impossible to say.

In the downfall of Jerusalem, observe how signally Micah's prediction (3:12) was fulfilled.

# ISAIAH, JEREMIAH AND EZEKIEL

| NAME | DATE | DOCTRINE OF GOD | SIN | SALVATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ISAIAH [1-39] | 740-701 B. C. | "The Holy One of Israel." (Used 12 times.) Majestic, Sovereign, King, His Godhead absolute. | Uncleanness, ritual, religious indifference, skepticism, luxury, dissipation, pride, ungodliness, apostasy, ingratitude, and rebellion against the True Sovereign. | Through belief, a "remnant" shall be saved. Zion is inviolable. She shall be purified and exalted. Peace and happiness: all culminating in the golden age of the Ideal Messianic **"King."** |
| ISAIAH [40-66] | c. 701 OR 549-538 | "The Holy One of Israel." (Used 13 times.) Everlasting, "The First and with the Last," incomparable, transcendent, exalted, creator, omniscent. | Utterly unworthy of redemption, wearied of sacrifices and prayer. Formal fasting, hands defiled with blood. Lips have spoken lies, obstinacy, sorcery, backsliding. | Comfort: Jehovah is coming to redeem. Israel saved with an everlasting salvation The **"Servant of Jehovah"** will suffer vicariously for the nation. All flesh shall come to worship at Jerusalem. |
| JEREMIAH | 626-586 | "The Fountain of Living Waters." Righteous, powerful, His Godhead manifest in Nature. Delighting in lovingkindness, judgment and righteousness. Ruling among the nations. | Civil wrongs; bloodshed, child murder, unfaithfulness to Jehovah, stubbornness of heart. Religion unreal. People have formed the "habit" of sinning. | Reformation, otherwise doom. Silver and lead to be separated in Jehovah's furnace. False prophets morally shallow Jehovah will raise up to the house of David a **"Branch of Righteousness."** |
| EZEKIEL | 592-570 | "The Lord Jehovah." Absolute, omnipotent, the living God, personal, moral, God over all. The rigidly just one, who trieth the hearts and reins. | Social wrongs; whoredom is the nation's chief sin: i. e. infidelity to Jehovah and alliances with foreign states. All classes infected. No good in Israel from the first. | The destruction of the state necessary but the people will be regenerated, and restored. A new heart and a new spirit. Also an everlasting covenant. "He shall come whose right it is." One **"Shepherd"** shall rule over both kingdoms. |

## STUDY XX.

### Cyrus, Jehovah's "Anointed" (Ezra 1—6).

*1st Day: The Divine Discipline of Israel.*

Read Deut. 28.

1. We have now reached a point in our survey of Israel's history where we may fittingly pause to inquire into the meaning of God's dealings with His chosen people. The prophets were never satisfied with the mere cataloguing of events, but sought their underlying principles and showed the nexus of cause and effect. They were the first historians, indeed, of the world to take a teleological view of human events, and to point out what is called "the philosophy of history."

2. To them the whole course of Israel's career displayed the disciplining love of God; perhaps, of all their national events, "the destruction of the state, in its effects, was the greatest step towards Christianity taken since the Exodus" (Davidson).

3. Four stages are traceable in Israel's divine discipline: (1) of slavery, in the school, so to speak, of Egypt, in which they were taught *independence;* (2) of wilderness wandering, in the university of Sinai, in which they were taught *dependence;* (3) of war, in Canaan, where they learned the necessity of *obedience;* and (4) of exile, in Babylonia, where they learned the folly of idolatry, individual responsibility, and above all their *mission* to the Gentiles.

4. The discipline of the Exile, especially, was manifold. In distant Babylonia, taunted by their enemies (cf. Ps. 137), they learned that the Jehovah of the prophets was

no mere national God; that religion must be divorced from ritual; that the law engraved upon tables of stone must be written on the heart; that the individual stood in personal covenant relation to God, and that their mission was to bring salvation to the ends of the earth through a Messiah, who was to be world-wide; in short, that the ruin of the State meant the rise of the Church.

Reflect on the four corresponding periods in a man's spiritual experience; when, for example, in slavery to sin he is taught independence; in later years dependence; in middle life obedience; and when far away from his Father's house, it may be, he begins to realize his individual responsibility to a needy world.

*2d Day: Prophetic Voices among the Exiles.*

Glance over Ezek. 40—48 and Dan. 1—9.

1. Politically and religiously, the Babylonian exile was the greatest crisis in Israel's national history. "If Israel had been merely a race like others, it would never have survived the catastrophe. But Israel was the bearer of an idea" (Cornill). Prophets continued to prophesy.

2. Ezekiel had doubtless grown up under Jeremiah's influence; though in their writings neither one mentions the other. Yet, in keeping with Jeremiah's letter (cf. Jer. 29), Ezekiel encouraged the exiles on the banks of the river Kebar to build houses, plant gardens and live contentedly in Babylonia until the captivity should pass. He is among the most book-learned of the prophets. He was an author as well as a preacher. He had two audiences, the one real and present; the other, the ideal house of Israel as a whole.

3. In chapters 40-48 of his prophecies, he paints the New Theocracy or State Church. The new temple shall be independent and isolated, the priests shall be the sons of Zadok, the land shall be reapportioned according to the twelve tribes, and the name of the city shall be "Jehovah

is there." Ezekiel thus kept the Messianic future before his hearers. "What Augustine's *Civitas Dei* was to the Latin Church of mediæval times, that this vision of Ezekiel was to the post-exilic Judaism—each furnished the ideal that moulded the polity of the age" (Skinner).

4. Daniel was another notable belonging to this age. His life seems to have covered the whole period of the Exile. See diagram. He was a "most excellent example of a true Israelite; to all appearance an Eastern sage rather than a Hebrew prophet" (Stanley). The representations which he gives to Nebuchadnezzar's insanity (zoanthropia), his own visions and personal memoirs, and the other historical data, agree in their general outline with the few fragments which archæology has discovered concerning this period; and they illustrate better than any other portion of the Old Testament the great theological teaching of Ezekiel: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (cf. Ezek. 18:4). At length, in his old age, Daniel saw in a vision a new and everlasting kingdom set up by the "Ancient of Days" upon the ruins of Babylonia. This was "the first announcement of a kingdom of heaven" (Stanley).

During the Captivity synagogues and prayer perforce took the place of what, respectively?

*3d Day: Comfort and Consolation Promised.*

Read Isa. 40.

1. Probably no part of the Old Testament is more precious to God's suffering children, nor did any portion of Isaiah's prophecies bring more consolation to the melancholy exiles in Babylonia, than Isa. 40-66, frequently called "Second Isaiah." One cares little about the origin of these prophecies, however, when he has once felt their power. There was doubtless an Isianic kernel at their base which may have been revised, adapted and enlarged during the Captivity.

2. Handel, in his exquisite oratorio, "The Messiah," makes effective use of the prologue in ch. 40:1-11. In this section the voice of Grace (vs. 1-2) is succeeded by the voice of Providence (vs. 3-5); and this by the voice of Faith (vs. 6-8). Then follows Jehovah's pledge to redeem His captive people. Human flesh, such as the Babylonians, may attempt to thwart His purpose, but it is impossible; the covenant word of God's promise shall stand forever. See Isa. 40:8.

3. For, as the prophet goes on to show, Jehovah is incomparable. He is also infinite. His majesty is obvious both in Creation and Providence (vs. 12-26). He never faints or grows weary. On the contrary, to such as faint He gives strength (vs. 27-31). The whole prophecy is one of supreme consolation, which must have rejoiced the heart of every exile.

*God's Covenant Word shall stand forever* (Isa. 40:8).

"Last eve I paused beside a blacksmith's door,
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
Then, looking in, I saw upon the floor
Old hammers, worn with beating years of time.

"'How many anvils have you had,' said I,
'To wear and batter all these hammers so?'
'Just one,' he answered; then with twinkling eye:
'The anvil wears the hammers out, you know.'

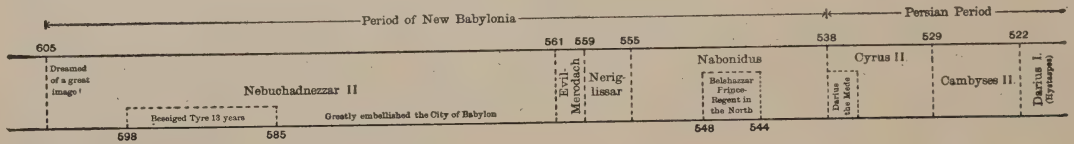
"And so, I thought, the anvil of God's word
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon,
Yet though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The anvil is unworn—the hammers, gone."

*4th Day: Cyrus, the "Liberator and Benefactor of Israel."*

Read 2 Chron. 36:22, 23, and Ezra 1:1-5.

1. The New Babylonian Empire, founded by Nebuchadnezzar, maintained itself during the brief reigns of but

# THE PERIOD OF THE PROPHET DANIEL




586 536

Fall of Jerusalem — ISRAEL IN CAPTIVITY or The Period of Babylonish Exile — Isaiah 40-66 [?] — End of Exile

605 603 — DANIEL — c. 537 c. 535

Daniel carried captive to Babylon

Interpreted Neb.'s dream and received promotion [Ch. 2]

Predicted Neb.'s madness [Ch. 4]

Associated by Ezekiel with Noah and Job as a man of great piety [Ezek. 14. 14]

Silent Years!

Interpreted the hand writing on the wall [Ch. 5] Saw vision of the "Son of Man" [Ch. 7]

Cast into Den of Lions but afterwards promoted [Ch. 6]

Saw visions of the future fortunes of his people [Chs. 10-12]?

three successors. See diagram of Daniel's Period. During these few years Media rose to power under Cyaxares, and quite as quickly under Astyages, his son, lost its supremacy to Cyrus, who had formerly been its vassal. Cyrus not only declared his independence, but defeated the Median army and captured Ecbatana, the capital (550 B. C.). He followed up this victory by subduing Crœsus, king of Lydia, the richest monarch of antiquity (546 B. C.), and eight years later actually wrested Babylon from Nabonidus (538 B. C.); thus fulfilling the predictions of Jer. 25:11, 29:10, 51:61-64.

2. "No monarch of antiquity awakened such interest as Cyrus, both from his character and his exploits. Even in Greece, history not only recorded his brilliant victories, but he himself became the hero of Romance, as in the Cyropædia of Xenophon" (Davidson). "In but twelve years, with his handful of Persians, he destroyed forever three great empires (Media, Lydia and Babylonia), conquered all Asia, and secured to his race for two centuries the dominion of the world; with him the hegemony over Asia passed from the Semitic to the Indo-Germanic races" (Cornill).

3. Exactly how Cyrus succeeded in taking Babylon is not clear, but that the city was captured at night while the Babylonians were revelling (cf. Dan. 5), and that the waters of the Euphrates were diverted from their course, allowing the enemy to enter the city by the river-bed, as Herodotus and Xenophon relate, is tacitly confirmed by Cyrus' own Cylinder Inscription, which states that he entered the city "without fighting or battle."

4. Cyrus' seizure of Babylon created a delirium of joy among the captive Israelites. In him they recognized the unconscious agent of their redemption. Cyrus was a just and gentle prince. Almost immediately he issued an edict, giving the Jews liberty to return to Palestine. This was in keeping with the prophecies of Isa. 44:28 and 45:1, in which he is described as Jehovah's "shepherd" and

"anointed." Josephus relates that "these and similar prophecies were brought before Cyrus and won for Israel his favor," which Davidson considers "not improbable."

Contrast with Cyrus, Pharaoh's enforced liberation of the Israelites in Exod. 12:29-32.

*5th Day: The Return of the Jews in* 536 B. C.

Read Ezra 2 and Neh. 7.

1. Cyrus' chief motive in liberating the Jews was probably political. By birth he was Elamite, not Persian. "His proclamation shows that he was not a Zoroastrian, like Darius and Xerxes, but, as he claims, the successor of the Babylonian kings, acknowledging the supremacy of Bel-Merodach, the supreme Babylonian god. Hence, the restoration of the Jewish exiles was not due to any sympathy with monotheism, but was part of a general policy, to reverse the Babylonian custom of deportation and denationalization" (Sayce). Moreover, Egypt was Persia's chief foe, and a friendly colony was needed in Jerusalem.

2. Accordingly in the year 536 B. C., under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Jeshua, a band of 42,360, besides 7,337 men- and maid-servants, set out from Babylon for Jerusalem. Among them there were representatives of "all Israel"; for the movement was a national one, and they had a council of twelve elders. See Neh. 7:7. The theory of the "Lost Ten Tribes" is a myth of modern times, based upon a Jewish tradition in 2 Esdras 13:40, 41.

3. Three or four months must have been required for the journey (cf. Ezra 7:8, 9). With what eagerness they covered the long and tedious distance we can only speculate. Doubtless their anxiety was intense. To many of them, the land was new; to the oldest it was changed, yet the neighboring inhabitants remained about the same. Only a small central strip of the country round Jerusalem, formerly occupied by Judah and Benjamin, was theirs. From these two tribes most of the exiles were de-

scended. Some settled in Gibeon, Ramah, Geba and Michmash; others in Anathoth, Bethel, Ai, Jericho, Bethlehem and Kirjath-jearim. "About one-tenth of the returned emigrants settled in Jerusalem" (Cornill), which remained the undisputed queen of the whole country in an unprecedented sense. "Each returned like a bird to its nest after the migration of winter" (Stanley). Henceforth the Hebrews were known as Jews.

In view of Ezra 2 and Neh. 7, what shall be said of Koster's theory, that there was no return of the exiles in the time of Cyrus, and that the Temple was built not by returned exiles, but by the people who had been left in the land by Nebuchadnezzar?

*6th Day: Hindrances to Temple Building* (536-520 B. C.).

Read Ezra 3—4.

1. The one object which filled the thoughts of the returning exiles, and for which the return had been permitted by Cyrus, was the building of an house of the Lord God of Israel at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Accordingly, in the seventh month ("Tishri" of the Babylonians; our October), the people assembled at Jerusalem and set up the altar of burnt-offering on its old site; the Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated; and from that time the daily burnt-offering was presented and the ritual reestablished. Early in the next year, the foundations of the Temple were laid (535 B. C.). See Ezra 3:11.

2. Scarcely had the Jews begun to build, however, before the Samaritans—the half-caste descendants of the Assyrian immigrants introduced by Sargon (2 Kings 17:24), by Esarhaddon (Ezra 4:2), and by Asshurbanipal (the Osnappar of Ezra 4:10)—proffered their assistance. But the Jews promptly refused to allow them a share in the work. They were of impure blood. "This awakened their hostility, and probably friction and reprisals ensued between the two communities" (Davidson). Look up

Zech. 8:10. The result was that the Jews were misrepresented to the Persian authorities, and the work of building the superstructure was left uncompleted for sixteen years, until the second year of Darius Hystaspes. See Hag. 1:14, 15.

3. Of these sixteen silent years we have no definite information, but it is sufficiently evident from the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah that during this period the people became religiously indifferent, turning their attention to building for themselves "ceiled houses." See Hag. 1:4, 5; Zech. 1:4.

The student will notice an apparent chronological confusion in the text of Ezra 4. Verses 6-23 seem to be a dislocated fragment episodically inserted. It may be of interest to add that Ezra 4:8—6:18 and 7:12-26, like Dan. 2:4b—7:28, are originally written in Aramaic, not in Hebrew.

*7th Day: The Temple Finished and Dedicated* (520-516 B. C.)—*Review.*

1. Darius was a true successor of Cyrus. In his eyes the policy of Cyrus was sacred. The aged Haggai and the youthful Zechariah, accordingly, took advantage of the king's liberal attitude, and exhorted the people to rise up and complete God's house. Three months later, work was actually begun; and though the people were few and their resources were small, and they realized that the new house was "as nothing" compared with Solomon's temple, yet Haggai assured them that the new edifice would exceed Solomon's in glory (cf. Hag. 2:9); and Zechariah, in a series of eight splendid night-visions, persuaded them, finally, to bring the task to completion.

2. Four and one-half years after the work was resumed, the Temple were solemnly dedicated with appropriate ceremonies (516 B. C.). Between the destruction of the first temple and the dedication of the second were exactly

seventy years (586-516). Look up Zech. 1:12, 7:5; Jer. 25:11, 29:10. A feast followed, and the Passover was also celebrated amidst much joy and thankfulness. See Ezra 6:15-22.

3. Hope centered in the new house. God's tabernacle was again among them, and the Messianic age was nearer actual dawn. No wonder that Zechariah's prophecies are the most Messianic of any in the Old Testament. In view of the glorious times in which he flourished, one can hardly be surprised at the apocalyptic character of his visions in chapters 1-8, or even at the eschatological pictures of chapters 9-14. The prophet's soul was knit with the future. He was full of hope. Jehovah's purpose in raising up Cyrus had now been fulfilled.

Review the principal events and recall the chief agents in the period between the destruction and the dedication of the Temple. What was Cyrus' importance as a factor in the transformation that took place in Israel?

## STUDY XXI.

### Esther, the Jewish Heroine.

*1st Day: The Condition of the Jews in Esther's Age.*

Read Ezra 4:6.

1. The brief statement of Ezra 4:6 comprises all that is known of the condition of the Jews between the dedication of the Temple in 516 B. C. and the return of Ezra in 458 B. C. And this little scrap of information merely informs us that the Jews in Jerusalem were accused to Ahasuerus by the people of the land, without specifying the grounds. "Probably an attempt was made to surround Jerusalem with walls" (Wade).

2. The great leaders, Zerubbabel and Jeshua, had passed away, and no one had arisen to take their places. Any hope, therefore, which the new colony may have had of restoring the ancient monarchy was now gone. Besides, there was the Temple, but Jehovah had not returned to it "in glory." And as for Jerusalem, instead of teeming with an overflowing population as they expected (cf. Zech. 2:4), it remained a waste and empty.

3. "A period of grievous depression and disillusionment followed. The faith and ardor of the first generation of exiles did not animate their successors" (Ottley). "The zeal of the leaders was neutralized, not only by opposition from without, but by the apathy, the selfishness, and worldliness that prevailed amongst their followers" (Skinner). The colony had degenerated socially, morally and religiously.

4. In such a period lived Esther, the queen of Ahasuerus, or Xerxes (485-465 B. C.). Many famous women

are found among the Hebrews. Sarah, Miriam, Deborah, Jael, Hannah, Huldah, and Judith are all celebrated, but in one respect Esther is the most famous of all,—*she saved her people from a general massacre.* All praise to the people whose religion and home-life produced heroines as well as heroes, patriots and queens as well as statesmen and kings!

Is Esther mentioned in the Bible outside the book called by her name?

*2d Day: Xerxes' Feast* (483 B. C.).

Read Esther 1.

1. The Book of Esther is thoroughly Persian. It opens with a scene in the palace at Shushan, or Susa. Ahasuerus, who was better known to the Greeks as Xerxes, while making preparations for a mighty expedition into Greece, gave in the third year of his reign a half-year's festival to his princes and nobles; during which time the satraps of his one hundred and twenty-seven provinces brought in their armies and wealth.

2. Following the festival to the nobles, the king also made a special feast of seven days, in the court of the garden of the king's palace, to all his people, great and small; the king and the men feasting by themselves, and queen Vashti and the women by themselves. On the seventh day, when the king had become intoxicated through wine, like an Oriental despot he ordered that the queen should come in unveiled before the assembled court. But Vashti modestly refused. "Her beauty was her own and her husband's; it was not for open show among hundreds of half-drunken men" (Whyte). Whereupon the king in a rage publicly dismissed her into disgrace and banishment; and not long after set out to invade Greece with an army and a navy of fabulous size and strength.

3. In character Xerxes was exceedingly proud. "No one ever walked more in a vain show than he did. His

fondness for display was the visual image of a weak and cowardly spirit. He was accustomed to act 'like a spoilt child,' which very likely he was. Mothers like Atossa do not produce great sons" (Fairweather).

The following lines describe Xerxes' fortunes in the West (480 B. C.):

"A king sat on a rocky brow,
Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;
And ships by thousands lay below,
And men in nations all were his.
He counted them at break of day,
But when the sun set, where were they?"

*3d Day: Esther Chosen Queen* (478 B. C.).

Read Esther 2.

1. When Xerxes returned from his fruitless expedition into Greece, "in the seventh year of his reign," he promoted Esther into Vashti's place (478 B. C.) See Esther 2:16. Now, Esther was a Hebrew orphan, the cousin of Mordecai, who, after the death of her parents, had adopted her as his own daughter and brought her up. How the devout old man's heart must have rejoiced, when, at the end of the long contest of maidens, he saw his foster-daughter elevated from exile and poverty, and actually made the queen of the greatest empire then standing on the face of the earth!

2. During the contest, Esther had been careful not to betray her national identity as a Jewess. Nevertheless, the sacred writer, whose chief aim is to show that the divine hand was in the promotion of Esther, adds, "the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained favor and kindness in his sight more than all the virgins" (cf. Esther 2:17). One needs to transport himself to an Oriental court like that of the Sultan of Turkey, or of the Shah of Persia, as they exist to-day, fully to appreciate the story.

3. Mordecai also held a court position. He sat in the king's gate, a large square tower characteristic of Oriental capitals, "like the Gate of Justice in the Alhambra, or the Sublime Porte at Constantinople." And so it happened, shortly after, that two disaffected chamberlains of the palace sought to lay hands upon the king; but Mordecai, through Esther, reported their plot to the king, and thus saved the king's life. A record of Mordecai's kindness was made according to Persian custom, and carefully preserved in the royal archives. See Esther 2:21-23 and compare 6:1-3.

In the light of the Persian custom to keep a register of public benefactors, study the allusion in Mal. 3:16.

*4th Day: Haman's Attempt to Massacre the Jews* (473 B. C.).

Read Esther 3.

1. Five years passed. Esther was still queen, and Mordecai sat as formerly in the gate of the royal seraglio. But the Jew was soon to have a hateful rival. Haman, an Amalekite, descendant of the hereditary enemies of Israel, received promotion over all the princes of Xerxes' realm, and command was given that all the king's servants should bow down in honor before him.

2. As a Jew, Mordecai found it impossible to make obeisance to a son of Esau (cf. Gen. 36:12). Haman was wroth; and being diabolically wicked at heart, he determined to make Mordecai's personal insult the pretext on which to destroy all the Jews scattered throughout the Persian dominions. Conscious of the terrible magnitude of such a task, and in keeping with his superstitious character, he cast "Pur"—a Persian word for "lot,"—until an auspicious date was found for the commencement of the massacre—eleven whole months ahead. Then by means of an immense bribe of spoil which he expected to obtain through the bloody transaction, he proceeded to procure

from the king a decree for a general massacre and pillage of the Jews everywhere.

3. Xerxes, weak, cruel and effeminate, carelessly yielded to the wishes of his wicked favorite, gave his seal into Haman's hand, and allowed his unscrupulous representative to sign and issue a decree, which was carried by posts into all the king's provinces, "to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day . . . and to take the spoil of them for a prey" (cf. Esther 3:13).

4. It was a critical moment for the Jewish church in the Persian Empire. But "whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein" (Prov. 26:27).

Haman's plot was born of hate. But was Mordecai's conduct wholly justifiable? "All vices are in us all," says Seneca; but not equally conspicuous.

*5th Day: Esther's Heroism.*

Read Esther 4—8.

1. The Jews, of course, were thrown into panic by Haman's decree. Mordecai took care to warn Esther that her life was also imperiled in a general massacre, and urged her to intercede with the king in her people's behalf, adding, "and who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" See Esther 4:14.

2. Esther, however, hesitated. For, according to the law, no one could safely enter the inner court of the palace except him to whom the king should hold out the golden sceptre. But she soon nerved herself to venture, at the risk of her life, returning answer to Mordecai: "I will go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish" (cf. Esther 4:16). Noble patriotism! Martyr courage! How little such language savors of romance!

3. All went well. The king extended his sceptre, and inquired as to her request. Oriental-like, she answered,

"Let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him." And at the banquet, when the king inquired again what her petition might be, she merely invited the king and Haman to a second banquet.

4. Haman was greatly elated; but between the banquets the despised Mordecai was honored instead of being hung on the gallows which Haman had prepared for him. And at the banquet Haman's plot to destroy all the Jews in one day was announced by Esther to the king. The king was horrified. He seems to have been ignorant of Haman's edict. Perhaps he knew of it, but did not appreciate its atrocious character. He wished to change it. But the personal infallibility with which he clothed himself rendered it impossible for him to repeal his own decree; he could, however, issue an order which would thwart its effect, "in theory acknowledging, in practice contradicting it." And so he did. For he authorized the Jews, by means of a second decree which Mordecai issued and sent by posts throughout the kingdom, to be ready, when the fatal day should come, "to avenge themselves on their enemies." And the Jews everywhere rejoiced and were glad. See Esther 8:13-17.

What special lessons are taught by Esther's patriotic conduct?

*6th Day: The Feast of Purim.*

Read Esther 9 and 10.

1. When the thirteenth day of the twelfth month came, the Jews, in keeping with the royal decree of Mordecai, were armed for the expected massacre. They gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of Persia, and, instead of being slain themselves, they smote everywhere their enemies who rose up against them. In Shushan alone on the first day the Jews slew five hundred, besides the ten sons of Haman, whom they also hanged; while altogether throughout the provinces

75,000 perished. See Esther 9:16 (the Septuagint Version has 15,000).

2. And now we have arrived at the main point of the story, the establishment of the Feast of Purim. For, on the basis of this tragic event, there was instituted a custom among the Jews of celebrating the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month Adar (March) "as the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies," and their sorrow was turned into joy. "Wherefore, they called these days Purim, after the name of Pur." And the feast was confirmed by a special decree of Esther. See Esther 9:20-32.

3. To the Jews of the Dispersion this Festival of Deliverance became a social and national occasion of rejoicing,—a sort of second Passover, preceding the regular paschal feast by only one month. And yet it was not distinctively a religious ceremony; rather, of all the Hebrew feasts it is the most patriotic. But, because of the feeling of bitter animosity which it perpetuates, it is the least Christian.

Recall the three great feasts of the Hebrew calendar, as recorded in Exod. 23:14-17: (1) Passover, followed by Unleavened Bread, in April; (2) Harvest, or Feast of Weeks, in May; (3) Tabernacles, or Feast of Ingathering, in October.

*7th Day: The Historical Value of the Book of Esther.*

1. Despite all the objections that have been raised against the historicity of the book, "the simplest way out of the dilemma is to suppose that the story of Esther stands upon a historical basis of fact, and that it has been worked up into its present literary form by a Jew of later days who was living in Persia, and who was perfectly familiar with the records and traditions of the reign of Xerxes" (Adeney). It surely illustrates admirably "the

capacity of the Jews for making their influence felt amid their heathen surroundings" (Ottley).

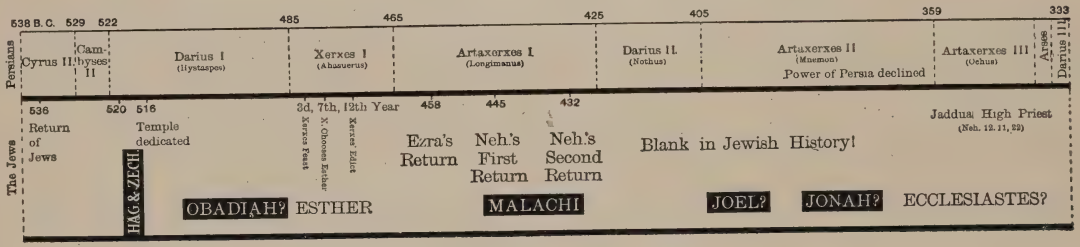
2. It furnishes also a marvellously self-consistent picture of Persian manners and customs, and fills a gap in Jewish history which is otherwise a total blank. Moreover, it is intensely human, revealing most vividly the Jewish instinct of nationality; and though it never alludes to God or to the Holy Land, it does teach the great and important doctrine of Divine Providence; and has brought untold joy and solace to many a Jewish heart "when threatened with extinction by a violent outburst of the mad *Judenhetze* (hatred of Jews) that has pursued this unhappy people through all the centuries of history" (Adeney).

3. The book should not be judged by Christian, or even by Hebrew standards. The civilization in which the Jews then lived was Persian. "Glorified by the genius of Handel, and sanctified by the piety of Racine, it not only affords material for the noblest and gentlest of meditations, but is a token that in the daily events of life God is surely present. The name of God is *not* there, but the work of God *is*" (Stanley).

4. Little wonder that the early Jews ranked it with the "Law" as the next most precious portion of Holy Scripture. And yet, from the Christian viewpoint, of all the books of the Old Testament it is farthest removed from the spirit of the Gospel. It is never quoted in the New Testament.

"There are not good things enough in life to indemnify us for the neglect of a single duty" (Madame Swetchine).

## THE PERSIAN PERIOD



## STUDY XXII.

### Ezra and Nehemiah.

*1st Day: Ezra's Return* (458 B. C.).

Read Ezra 7—8.

1. Notwithstanding Esther's marvellous deliverance of her people from sudden destruction, conditions among them grew morally worse and worse. Even the priests lost their zeal in religion and showed their contempt for holy things by bringing blemished victims to God's altar. See Mal. 1:6-8. Indifference to moral law prevailed everywhere. The Jerusalem colony seriously needed reform.

2. Babylon was able to provide the reformers. "The Jews in Babylonia were really better representatives of their religion than those living in Jerusalem" (Fairweather). "They were more happily situated than those at home. The distinction between them and the heathen around them was abrupt and absolute; compromise or coalescence was out of the question" (Davidson).

3. Ezra, a ready scribe, well versed in the Law, pious, of priestly lineage, and enjoying high favor with Artaxerxes, the son and successor of Xerxes, organized a movement which amounted almost to a second return (See page 209). On April 1, 458 B. C., he assembled a caravan of about 1,600 men, including 38 Levites and 220 Nethinim (certain inferior Temple-ministers), and twelve days later set out to go unto Jerusalem. Four months brought them safely to their destination (August 1), and they celebrated with appropriate sacrifices the completion of their long journey. See Ezra 7:9, 8:35.

4. Ezra's movement was obviously regarded by the

Jews as a national one, and probably included representatives of all the twelve tribes. The letter of Artaxerxes, in which he authorized Ezra to enforce with severe penalties both the law of God and the law of the state, shows that the king, too, regarded it as an act of the Jewish nationality. See Ezra 7:24-26.

Observe the character of Artaxerxes' letter in Ezra 7:12-26. It is originally in Aramaic. But observe especially Ezra's characteristic expression, "The good hand of our God upon us" (cf. Ezra 7:6, 9, 28; 8:18, 22, 31).

*2d Day: Ezra's Mission and Work* (458 B. C.).

Read Ezra 9—10.

1. After delivering to the proper custodians of the Temple the rich offerings (estimated to have been equivalent to $5,000,000) which Artaxerxes and the leading Jews of Babylonia had sent, Ezra proceeded at once to his work. His mission was not political or civil, but religious. He had come to Palestine primarily to teach the Law and secure its execution. Strangely enough, he saw to its *execution* first!

2. The supreme problem which confronted him was the matter of mixed marriages. When he discovered that not only the nobles and the common people, but also the priests were guilty of having taken foreign wives, he was horrified. He rent his mantle, tore his hair and beard, and sat silent as in a stupor until the evening oblation. Then he arose, fell upon his knees, and, in the hearing of a vast crowd that gathered, offered one of the most remarkable prayers recorded in the Old Testament. See Ezra 9:6-15.

3. It contains no petition; only confession. What is most remarkable about it is the fact that in it he completely identifies himself with the people, and "confesses Jerusalem's sins with an agony such as if all their sins had been his own." As he continued, the curious specta-

tors became sympathetic. One kindred spirit in particular, Shecaniah, "broke in and declared that he and his fellow-elders could stand such praying no longer" (Whyte); accordingly, he proposed that they divorce their foreign wives. All those present consented, and "for the moment the spirit of Puritanism triumphed" (Ottley).

4. Ezra then arose and made them solemnly swear that they would keep their word; and immediately summoned a popular assembly to meet on December 20th following, at which every male member of the colony was ordered to appear under penalty of excommunication. But when they came together, the weather being cold and wet, and the matter being difficult and delicate to handle, it was decided to appoint a commission, with Ezra at its head, to deal with those who had offended. The commission set to work, and three months later reported 113 cases of mixed marriages, of whom 17 were priests, 10 Levites, and 86 laymen.

In view of Deut. 7:3 and 21:10-14, was not Ezra already "hedging" the law with unwarrantable restrictions? Should a polygamous heathen to-day be required to divorce all of his wives save one, before he is allowed membership in the Christian Church?

*3d Day: Ezra's Attempt to Build the Walls* (ca. 446 B. C.).

Read Ezra 4:7-23.

1. Ezra's memoirs break off abruptly with the publication of the list of those found guilty of intermarriage (cf. Ezra 10:44), and there are no further accounts of his administration for twelve years. Cornill explains the silence thus: "Of course the reports of the period were intentionally suppressed because they were too sad and too humiliating. Plainly Ezra accomplished nothing, and an attempt to strengthen his position was a woeful failure." But there is nothing in Ezra 10 which supports this view, and the several statements to the effect that the

people yielded to Ezra's reformatory demands contradict it. See Ezra 10:12, 16, 17.

2. Some naturally would attempt to evade the law. But "whether finally successful or not, Ezra's measures must have led to many painful incidents within the community, and been the occasion of much bitter feeling. They also exasperated the peoples around, whose chief men saw their sisters and daughters stigmatized as belonging to an inferior race and repudiated" (Davidson). Accordingly, Jerusalem, being without walls and thinly populated, stood in great peril from her neighbors whom Ezra had offended.

3. Just here, therefore, between the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, belongs the "dislocated fragment" in Ezra 4:6-23. It records how, in the reign of Artaxerxes, the Jews, having begun through the influence of Ezra probably to build Jerusalem's walls, were accused of sedition to the king, and how he forthwith issued a decree that the work upon the walls should cease. This decree of Artaxerxes seems to have been interpreted by the Jews' enemies as equivalent to a license to them to destroy "by force and power" the work which had already been begun. See Ezra 4:23. Such an undertaking did not, of course, lie strictly within Ezra's original commission, but the introduction of the Law had been necessarily postponed.

How does Neh. 1:3 comport with this view?

*4th Day: The Arrival of Nehemiah* (445 B. C.).

Read Neh. 1 and 2.

1. The walls being destroyed, Ezra retired into privacy; but he was soon reinforced by Nehemiah, who is "one of the most engaging personalities in the Old Testament. The picture drawn of himself in chapters 1 and 2 is beyond a modern pencil" (Davidson). He was a layman, wealthy, devout, honest, self-reliant, and pre-eminently a man of one purpose. "What Ezra attempted, Nehemiah

achieved; the establishment and consolidation of the Jewish community is essentially his work and his merit" (Cornill).

2. He was cup-bearer to King Artaxerxes, a position which, according to Xenophon, was of very high honor in the etiquette of the Persians. Hearing from his brother Hanani that the Judean colonists were in great affliction and reproach, and that the wall of Jerusalem was also broken down and the gates burned with fire, he secured from the king an indefinite leave of absence to go unto Jerusalem, and authority as "governor" to restore the walls. See Neh. 5:14, 8:9. Artaxerxes likewise gave him an escort of captains and horsemen, and letters to the governors of the provinces, and a special order to Asaph, the king's forester, to supply him with timber.

3. Upon his arrival in Jerusalem, he spent three days quietly contemplating the situation and inspecting by moonlight the damage to the walls. Then he called the priests and elders together, and declared to them the shameful condition of Jerusalem, showed them the credentials which he had received from the king, and, appealing to their patriotism, exhorted them, saying: "Come and let us build." The royal sanction, which he was able to show them, dissipated their every doubt, and the work was undertaken. Nehemiah was a man of destiny.

How, again, do you reconcile Nehemiah's purpose to fortify Jerusalem with Zechariah's prediction that Jerusalem should be a city "without walls"? See Zech. 2:4. For an analogy, contrast Isaiah's confidence in the inviolability of Zion, and Jeremiah's despair concerning it. See Isa. 28:16 and Jer. 26:6.

*5th Day: Nehemiah Rebuilds the Walls* (444 B. C.).

Read Neh. 3—7.

1. Some sections of Scripture need to be read at one sitting. Neh. 3—7 is one.

2. Nehemiah's enthusiasm was contagious. Even the priests and nobles, who had at first little interest in the undertaking, caught the spirit of the new governor and united in the work. Nehemiah introduced the principle known as "division of labor"; every man built "over against his own house." Even Meshullam, a transient lodger in the city, repaired that part "over against his chamber." See Neh. 3:30. "The whole wall rose from the ground at once" (Cornill). "It was like the rebuilding of the wall at Athens after the invasion of Xerxes,—like the building of the walls of Edinburgh after the battle of Flodden. Every class of society, every district in the country, took part in it" (Stanley).

3. But there was opposition from without and trouble from within. The surrounding tribes contested inch by inch his great enterprise. Sanballat, the crafty governor of Samaria; Tobiah, the ransomed "slave" of the Ammonites, and Geshem, a sheikh of the Arabs, tauntingly scoffed at Nehemiah's enterprise. But only the weak give up when ridiculed. Nehemiah showed himself a general. When his enemies sarcastically sneered at him, he prayed; when they resorted to violence he kept on praying and set a watch. See Neh. 4:4, 5, 9.

4. But the most serious trouble came from within. The common people were downtrodden and oppressed. It was similar in Greece in the days of Solon. Nehemiah now proved himself a social organizer. He called a general assembly, rebuked the avaricious usurers, and bade them restore to the needy proletariat their mortgaged lands and houses. They obeyed. Nehemiah was able to command because of his personal example. See Neh. 5:10.

5. As the walls advanced toward completion, again and again Nehemiah's enemies tried to lure him away from the work under the pretext of a conference. "But he was too shrewd a man to walk into this trap" (Fairweather). Finally, Sanballat sent him an "open letter,"

in which he accused him of having appointed prophets to proclaim him king. In the Orient an open letter is a great insult. He even bribed Shemaiah to intimidate Nehemiah and persuade him, if possible, to hide in the temple. But, like Thomas à Becket of Canterbury, Nehemiah boldly refused "to turn the cathedral into a castle."

6. At length, in spite of all opposition, the walls were completed and the gates hung. The whole task had been accomplished in fifty-two days, during which time Nehemiah did not have his clothes off, except for washing. See Neh. 4:23.

Deduce at least four practical lessons from Nehemiah's *method* of work.

*6th Day: Ezra Introduces the Law* (444 B. C.).

Read Neh. 8—10.

1. Ezra's reformation of mixed marriages had taken place in 458 B. C.; the walls were finished and probably dedicated in September of 444; and now the time had come for the greater and more important work of introducing the Law, which was Ezra's original and long-cherished purpose. "Ezra, relying on the support of the new governor, now emerged from his retirement" (Ottley). How the great scribe spent the intervening years is unknown; "perhaps he may have employed them in preparing the Law" (Oehler).

2. Following probably close upon the dedication ceremonies (cf. Neh. 12:27-43), all the people gathered themselves together at Jerusalem (October, 444 B. C.), and requested Ezra to bring the book of the Law of Moses. A lofty wooden platform had been set up in the street before the Water Gate. Ezra mounted the platform and read, the Levites assisting by giving the sense in Aramaic paraphrase. See Neh. 8:8. This is the first instance of expository preaching.

3. The effect was tremendous. The people broke out into loud weeping. But Nehemiah expostulated, bidding them not "to mar with grief a day that was holy; and then dismissed them." The next day the reading was continued before the priests and Levites until Ezra came to the passage in Lev. 23:33-42, which directs that the Feast of Tabernacles shall be observed on the fifteenth day of the seventh month (October). They immediately resolved to celebrate it; and did so with unwonted joy and gladness. See Neh. 8:17.

4. During the feast, the Law was continuously read: and at its close on the twenty-fourth of the month, a day of national fasting and confession was observed, on which a solemn covenant was entered into by the people to obey the law; to refrain from intermarriage with foreigners, and from violating the Sabbath; and to support faithfully the Temple and the priests. See Neh. 10.

5. The event was one of great importance. It "marked a turning-point of deep interest in Jewish history. It laid the foundation stone of Judaism; it definitely transformed the nation into a congregation or church; it made the Law not merely the basis of civic and social life, but the common possession of each individual Israelite" (Ottley). "The twenty-fourth of October, 444 B. C., is the real birthday of Judaism, one of the most important days in the history of humanity" (Cornill). Ezra had at last succeeded.

Which type of preaching, expository, hortatory or inspirational, is the most effective to-day?

*7th Day: Nehemiah's Second Return* (432 B. C.)—*Review.*

Read Neh. 13.

1. In due time, Nehemiah's leave of absence expired (ca. 433 B. C.). So long as he was present in Jerusalem the people seem to have regarded with conscience their covenant obligations; but when he returned to Persia

and came again a second time, though he had been absent from Jerusalem only a few months, he found that the old sins had reappeared. See Neh. 13:6. The high priest Eliashib had not only assigned a chamber in the Temple to Tobiah, the Ammonite, but had even allowed his grandson (named Manasseh, according to Josephus) to marry Nicaso, the daughter of Sanballat—Nehemiah's chief adversary.

2. Nehemiah resorted to the most energetic measures. Tobiah and his household stuff were ejected from the Temple; and Manasseh, who refused to separate himself from his alien wife, was expelled, and actually "chased" from Jerusalem. See Neh. 13:28. From the flight of the renegade lawbreaker dates the origin of the Samaritan sect, and also the Samaritan Pentateuch (432 B. C.). Whoever thereafter was dissatisfied in Jerusalem simply withdrew and joined the religious community which Manasseh founded. In due time they built a temple on Mount Gerizim—which mountain still remains the sanctuary of the smallest religious sect in the world, numbering approximately 180 souls.

3. Thus Ezra and Nehemiah, the aged scribe and the young cup-bearer, the pastor and the governor, the preacher and the layman, the ecclesiastical and the civil patriots of their age, carried through to completion the work of reorganization and reformation. Though they were the parents of the various parties which subsequently divided Palestine into sects, they were nevertheless the prime factors in a general revival in Jerusalem, and the founders of a new order of things. Together they consolidated Judaism and re-established the Law. How long after 432 B. C. they survived, or how long Nehemiah acted as governor the second time, is unknown.

Which prophet was contemporaneous with them? See diagram. Note Nehemiah's prayer, in Neh. 13:14, for "posthumous fame."

# THE TWELVE (Minor) PROPHETS.

| NAME | DATE | DOCTRINE OF GOD | SIN | SALVATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| HOSEA [The Prophet of Love] | c.755-732 | A God of Love spiritual and in covenant relation to Israel. | Unfaithfulness to Jehovah swearing, killing, stealing, adultery, pride, worldliness and idolatry | Through the "Loving-kindness" of God. |
| JOEL [The Prophet of Pentecost] | c.835 OR c.400 | A God of Judgment yet gracious, full of compassion and slow to anger | Joel does not censure, yet he bids Judah repent. | The "Day of Jehovah" will issue in both judgment and redemption. God's Spirit will be poured out. |
| AMOS [The Prophet of Judgment] | c.760-750 | The "Lord Jehovah" the All-Sovereign Omnipotent in Nature and History | Inhumanity, immorality, formality in religion, cruelty, profanity and drunkenness. | Israel's hope for the future is connected with the house of David. |
| OBADIAH [The Prophet of Ridicule] | c.650 | A God of Retribution and Triumph. | Ridicule, lack of brotherly love, and revenge. | Judah shall be restored and the kingdom shall be Jehovah's. |
| JONAH [The Catholic Prophet] | c.750 OR c.350 | Gracious, showing kindness even to the heathen. | The heathen are sinners; even Jonah is guilty of anger | Universal salvation. |
| MICAH [The Prophet of the Poor] | c.735-715 | A God of Salvation ethical, majestic, pardoning sin. | Sins of the city oppression, violence, bribery, injustice, idolatry false prophecy | All nations shall stream Zion-ward. The Messiah will be born in Bethlehem and bring peace. |
| NAHUM [The Poet-Prophet] | c.625-608 | A God of Vengeance yet merciful, slow to anger, and good | Cruelty of the wicked world power—Nineveh. Lying, robbery and whoredom. | The Lord knoweth them that trust in him. |
| HABAKKUK [The Philosopher.] | c.609-605 | From everlasting the Holy One pure, powerful and just. A "Rock." | Lust of conquest, self-aggrandizement, oppression, pride, idolatry | The just shall live by His faithfulness. |
| ZEPHANIAH [The Orator] | c 630-621 | A God of Dicipline terrible toward the heathen. | Violence, deceit, selfishness, oppression, distrust, apathy, corruption. | A remnant shall be saved. Judgment is a means to an end |
| HAGGAI [The Prophet of the Second Temple] | 520 | "Jehovah of Hosts" the giver and withholder of good. | Indifference to duty-the duty to rebuild God's house. | The precious things of all nations shall be brought as gifts to Jehovah. |
| ZECHARIAH [The Seer of Visions] | 520-518 | "Jehovah of Hosts" enthroned as king over all the earth. | Lack of judgment, mercy and truth: imagining evil, stealing, swearing, false prophecy. | The Messiah shall rule from sea to sea. In Him a fountain shall be opened for sin and uncleanness. |
| MALACHI [The Lecturer] | c.445-432 | Unchangeable, Sovereign, Creator and Father: yet separated from men. | Dishonor of God, treachery, hypocrisy, divorce, sorcery, robbery, stubbornness and pride. | The worship of Jehovah shall be decentralized. Salvation will come through purification. |

## STUDY XXIII.

### Judas Maccabeus.

1*st Day: From Nehemiah to Judas* (432-168 B. C.).

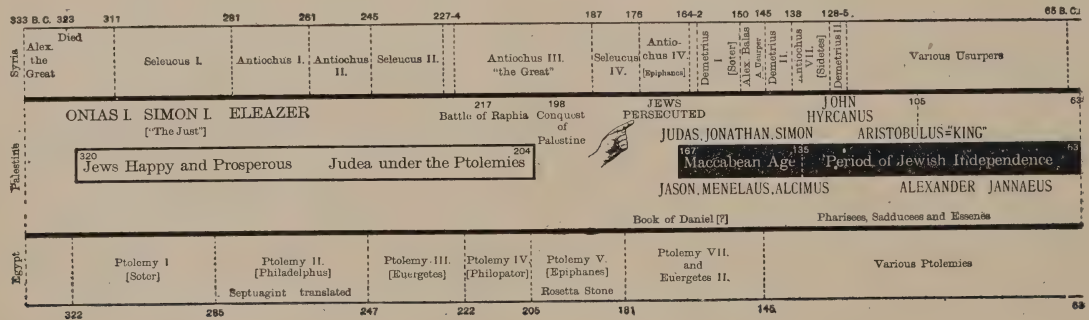
Consult Josephus' *Antiquities,* XI, 8.

1. The last century of the Persian period (432-333 B. C.) is, so far as the Jews are concerned, almost a complete blank. About all we know is that Artaxerxes III., for some reason, destroyed Jericho and transported large numbers of Jews to Hyrcania, on the inhospitable shores of the Caspian Sea.

2. In 332 B. C., when Alexander the Great conquered Palestine, the Jews were allowed absolute religious liberty. According to Josephus, as Alexander approached the Holy City he was met by a long procession of priests and elders clothed in white, who proffered him their ready submission. Alexander was so impressed by the scene that he fell down before Jaddua, the high priest, and worshipped Jehovah, whose name was engraved on his mitre; then entering the temple he offered a sacrifice according to the Law and confirmed the Jews in their religious rites. "Thus by tact and toleration he secured the friendship of a nation which had so often resisted the greatest monarchs of the Old World, and Palestine passed without a struggle from the rule of Persia to that of Greece" (Conder).

3. Alexander died in 323 B. C. He is usually identified with the "great horn" of Daniel 8:21. His successors are known as the *Diadochi.* Of the five kings who shared his vast dominions, only Seleucus and Ptolemy play any part in the history of Israel. Between Antioch and Alexandria

# THE GREEK PERIOD



there was constant strife for more than twenty years. Both sides courted Jewish favor, extending equal privileges of citizenship to Jews and Greeks. As a result many Jews voluntarily left Palestine and settled elsewhere, notably in Alexandria and Antioch. This was the beginning of the *Dispersion.*

4. For over a century the Jews of Palestine were comparatively happy and prosperous under the Ptolemies of Egypt; but in 198 B. C. Judea became a Syrian province, and it was not long before Antiochus' promises of religious liberty and exemption from taxation were forgotten. See diagram.

Alexander's policy has been summed up in two words—"conquest and fusion"; what would be some of the inevitable effects of such a policy on Hebrew conservatism?

*2d Day: Causes of the Maccabean Uprising.*

Read 1 Macc. 1:10-64; Daniel 11, and Josephus' *Antiquities,* XII, 5.

1. The immediate cause of the Maccabean uprising was the attempt made by Antiochus Ephiphanes to *Hellenize* the Jews; that is, to force upon them Greek civilization and the Greek religion. Alexander's desire had been to blend all nationalities into a new unity; his successors had practiced the same policy; but Antiochus Epiphanes was so immoderate in his demands that he received in lieu of the name Epiphanes, "the Illustrious," the nickname Epimanes, "the Maniac." He is alluded to in Dan. 11:21 as "a contemptible person."

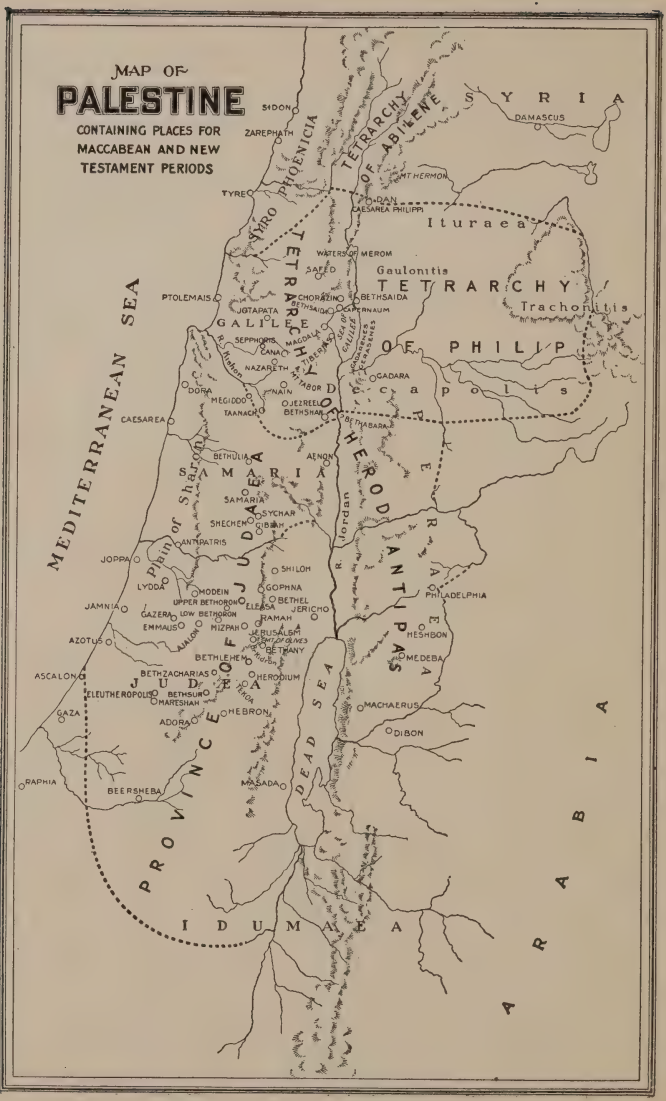
2. Avaricious priests served his wicked purposes. The faithful high priest, Onias III., was deposed through the influence of his unscrupulous brother Jason, who bribed the king to appoint him to the holy office. Three years later, another unprincipled aspirant, Menelaus, offered the king three hundred talents more than Jason had paid for

the position and got it. Jason was driven into exile to Sparta and died there.

3. Now, both Jason and Menelaus were Hellenists and favored the introduction of Greek customs. For example, Jason had erected in Jerusalem, with the king's permission, a Greek gymnasium, in which the priests, "casting aside their robes and neglecting the sacrifices," were accustomed to contend for popular applause in the heathen games (cf. 1 Macc. 1:14, 15); and Menelaus, in order to fulfill his obligations to Antiochus, boldly helped himself to the temple treasures. Pious Jews were inwardly exasperated. A silent conflict, therefore, between two spiritual forces—Hellenism and Judaism—was already smouldering beneath the surface.

4. The crisis came when Antiochus, after four years of fruitless warfare in Egypt (cf. Daniel 11:21-30), during which it had been joyfully reported in Jerusalem that he was dead, returned and spitefully determined to stamp out the Jews altogether. In three days forty thousand Jews were massacred. He then appointed Apollonius governor of Palestine and commanded him to suppress every Jewish custom. Circumcision was forbidden; the Sabbath was desecrated; copies of the Law were collected and burned; the Jews were forced to eat swine's flesh; the Temple was profaned; the whole city was plundered, its walls razed, and thousands of the inhabitants were sold into slavery; finally, on the twenty-fifth of Chisleu (December), 168 B. C., an altar to Jupiter Olympus—"the abomination of desolation" spoken of by Daniel, the prophet (cf. 9:27)—was set up on the top of the great altar of burnt-offering, and a sacrifice was offerred upon it to the heathen god, Zeus.

How account for God's allowing such chastisements to come upon the Jews?


MAP OF
PALESTINE
CONTAINING PLACES FOR MACCABEAN AND NEW TESTAMENT PERIODS
SIDON
ZAREPHATH
PHOENICIA
TYRE
TETRARCHY OF ABILENE
SYRIA
DAMASCUS
MT HERMON
CAESAREA PHILIPPI
Ituraea
WATERS OF MEROM
SAFED
Gaulonitis
TETRARCHY OF PHILIP
Trachonitis
PTOLEMAIS
CHORAZIN
BETHSAIDA
CAPERNAUM
GALILEE
SEPPHORIS
CANA
NAZARETH
MT TABOR
GADARA
Decapolis
DORA
MEGIDDO
JEZREEL
BETHSHAN
TAANACH
CAESAREA
BETHULIA
AENON
SAMARIA
SAMARIA
SYCHAR
SHECHEM
GIBBAR
ANTIPATRIS
Plain of Sharon
JOPPA
LYDDA
SHILOH
GOPHNA
MODEIN
BETHEL
ELEASA
JERICHO
PHILADELPHIA
JAMNIA
GAZERA
UPPER BETHORON
LOW BETHORON
RAMAH
EMMAUS
MIZPAH
HESHBON
AZOTUS
JERUSALEM
BETHANY
MEDEBA
BETHLEHEM
ASCALON
BETHZACHARIAS
HERODIUM
JUDEA
ELEUTHEROPOLIS
BETHSURO
MARESHAH
MACHAERUS
GAZA
HEBRON
ADORA
DIBON
RAPHIA
BEERSHEBA
MASADA
DEAD SEA
PROVINCE OF IDUMAEA
IDUMAEA
ARABIA
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
R. Jordan

*3d Day: The Outbreak of the Revolt* (167 B. C.).

Read 1 Macc. 2; Josephus' *Antiquities,* XII, 6.

1. Antiochus' policy of forcibly substituting Greek heathenism for the Jewish religion in Palestine triumphed but for a moment. In the village of Modein, about 18 miles northwest of Jerusalem (see map), lived an aged and pious priest named Mattathias, who had retired from Jerusalem, distressed at the miseries of the people, and who represented that class of uncompromising Puritans among the Jews known as the *Chasidim,* or "the pious."

2. Mattathias had five grown sons: John, the eldest, called "the Saint"; Simon, the second, esteemed the wisest and most prudent of the brethren; Judas Maccabeus, "the Hammerer," the boldest and most skilful in war; Eleazar, "the Beast-sticker" (he once stabbed an elephant in war, cf. 1 Macc. 6:43-46); and Jonathan, the youngest, known as "the Cunning." Mattathias' great-grandfather was Hasmon, "the Magnate," whence the family name *Hasmonean.*

3. Now, in course of time a visit was paid to Modein by Apelles, the king's chief commissioner. He assembled the inhabitants for the purpose of celebrating a heathen sacrifice, and ordered Mattathias, as the leading personage of the place, to set an example of submission to the king's authority. This Mattathias firmly refused to do. An apostate Jew, however, standing by offered to take his place. Mattathias, overcome with righteous indignation, rushed upon him and slew both him and the commissioner, and also demolished the altar. Then summoning the faithful to follow him, he and his sons fled to the mountains. "Nothing sifts a nation like persecution; it forces every man to take his side" (Fairweather).

4. "The news of this bold deed spread quickly over the country, and great numbers of the *Chasidim,* and others who had fled from persecution, came out of their hiding-

places and rallied round Mattathias" (Skinner). An irregular but vigorous crusade against idolatry was organized; night-attacks were made on apostate Jews; heathen altars in the surrounding country were destroyed, and compromising Hebrews were exhorted to return to a faithful observance of Jewish worship.

5. Soon after the uprising, however, the aged Mattathias died (167 B. C.), leaving the leadership to his son Judas, whom he designated the ablest in war. "Thus the first outbreak of the national revolt was due to the unpremeditated act of a single aged man" (Conder).

Was Mattathias' conduct justifiable?

*4th Day: Judas, "the Father of Jewish Freedom."*

Read 1 Macc. 3:1-9.

1. "Judas Maccabeus is the central figure of one of the most important periods of Jewish history. His public career extends only over eight years, and the work he commenced was left to his brothers and their descendants to carry out; yet the name of Judas stands out more distinctly than that of any other leader of the age, and he may justly be regarded as the father of Jewish freedom" (Conder). "In him the party of the faithful found a leader of the noblest type, a true hero and patriot, such as had not arisen in Israel since the days of David and Jonathan" (Skinner).

2. He is "probably the greatest warrior whom the people of Israel ever produced; in him the primitive heroic spirit of Israel is revived. But he achieved more than ever it did. In the course of four hundred years the people had become entirely unused to war and weapons, yet with his volunteers, supported by nothing but their faith in God, and in the final victory of His holy cause, Judas scattered the largest armies and won victory after victory. He was, in truth, a warrior of God, who regarded war as a sacred matter, and drew his sword only for God and

the oppressed faith; in his pure and ideal inspiration, combined with such genius in tactics and strategy, he calls to mind spontaneously the champion of religion, Gustavus Adolphus. His picture is spotless; he did nothing that could throw an unfavorable light upon his character or tarnish his memory. He must be reckoned among the most ideal figures in all history" (Cornill).

By whom, as a rule, have the great battles of history been won, standing armies or volunteers?

*5th Day: The Victories of Judas* (166-165 B. C.).

Read 1 Macc. 3—4; Josephus' *Antiquities,* XII, 7.

1. In the hands of Judas the struggle for religious freedom soon assumed the proportions of regular warfare. When Apollonius, the governor of Palestine, marched with a large army out of Samaria in 166 B. C., Judas met him and killed him, and carried off his sword as a trophy; "and therewith he fought all his days."

2. And when, a little later in the same year, Seron, the governor of Lebanon, advanced with a huge army, to take vengeance on the rebel troops, Judas opposed him at the pass of Beth-horon, almost on the very spot where Joshua had stood when he commanded the sun to stand still (cf. Josh. 10:12), and slew eight hundred of the Syrian host, the rest escaping to Philistia. "Two such victories made the name of Judas famous and gave Antiochus reason for much uneasiness" (Riggs).

3. When the news of Seron's defeat reached Antioch, the king was furious, and determined to destroy the Jewish nation from off the face of the earth. But, with an exhausted exchequer he himself was compelled to divide his forces and cross the Euphrates, to plunder the rich temples of Parthia, leaving at home his general, Lysias, in command of his imperial interests, but with special instructions to suppress the Jewish rebellion.

4. Lysias at once despatched three experienced gener-

als—Ptolemy, Nicanor and Georgias—with nearly fifty thousand men to Judea, to exterminate the Jews. Victory seemed so inevitably certain that slave-dealers followed up the Syrian army to purchase the Jewish captives who would be taken, their price being fixed in advance. But Judas, taking the initiative, won a most glorious victory in a battle at Emmaus, some distance west of Jerusalem. (See map, page 224.) This was, perhaps, the most brilliant of all his battles. Conder calls it "the Maccabean Austerlitz."

5. In the following year (165 B. C.), Lysias himself took command of the Syrian army, and, with sixty-five thousand men, invaded Judea from the southeast. Judas met him at Bethsur, where "they joined battle, and there fell of the army of Lysias about five thousand men." See 1 Macc. 4:34.

6. Judas now courageously attempted to capture Jerusalem, the only place still held by Syrian troops. He succeeded in getting possession of the Temple, but the citadel of Akra was too well garrisoned to be taken by assault. Accordingly, he was content to reconsecrate the Temple, erect a new altar in place of the polluted one, provide new utensils for the ritual; and, on the twenty-fifth of Chisleu (December), 165 B. C.—just three years after the first sacrifice had been offered to Olympian Zeus—once more to offer a burnt-offering to Jehovah, in keeping with the Jewish law.

This was the origin of what feast celebrated in the time of our Lord? See John 10:22.

*6th Day: Religious Freedom Obtained* (163 B. C.).

Read 1 Macc. 5—6; Josephus' *Antiquities,* XII, 8, 9.

1. With the cleansing of the Temple and the restoration of the ancient worship, the first stage of Judas' victories comes to a close. The year 164 B. C. was spent by him and his two brothers, Jonathan and Simon, in de-

fending the Jews in the outlying districts from the persecutions of their heathen neighbors, notably the Edomites, Ammonites and Philistines. They had become anxious for their own safety, and were massacring the Jews wherever they dared.

2. "But the most important event of the year was the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, which occurred as he was returning from his eastern expedition. He lived just long enough to hear of the complete failure of all his plans in Judea. His end was hastened by remorse for the crimes he had committed against the Jews" (Skinner). See 1 Macc. 6:1-17.

3. The citadel of Akra, in Jerusalem, still remained in the hands of the Syrians; and, now that Antiochus was dead, Judas determined to capture it. But the besieged Syrians at once despatched urgent appeals to Antioch for help, and Lysias responded with an army of 100,000 infantry, 20,000 cavalry, and 32 elephants, entering Judea from the south. The contending forces met at Bethzacharias. (See map, page 224.) Lysias, with his immense host, swept everything before him. Bethsur fell, and the citadel of Jerusalem was relieved.

4. Lysias began to besiege the Temple Mount. Unfortunately for the Jews, it happened to be the Sabbatic year, and their provisions were limited, and soon exhausted. They were on the point of yielding, when, suddenly, tidings of such a nature came from Antioch that Lysias deemed it advisable to come to terms with the Jews and return home. The relief was timely. A treaty of peace was hastily concluded (163 B. C.), according to which the Jews were guaranteed full liberty "to live after their own laws as they did before" (cf. 1 Macc. 6:59).

5. "Real freedom was thus attained, the Temple service was re-established, the law of Moses was observed, and the Jew could circumcise his children, and study the Torah as his conscience commanded, without fear of persecution. Peace and security once more existed within the

borders of Judea, and from this centre the future state was destined to grow steadily larger" (Conder).

"When the shore is won at last,
Who shall count the billows past?"

*7th Day: Death of Judas* (161 B. C.)—*Review.*

Read 1 Macc. 7:1—9:22; Josephus' *Antiquities,* XII, 9-11.

1. The treaty with Lysias secured to the Maccabees complete religious freedom—all they had originally taken up arms for; and "amidst all the subsequent vacillations of Syrian policy this concession appears never to have been formally revoked." The conflict, thereafter, was primarily not concerning religion, but government.

2. Judas must not be censured for not having laid down the sword. The legality of Jewish freedom was still contested. Though the apostate high priest, Menelaus, was executed, Alcimus, another Hellenist, was appointed in his place. Moreover, Demetrius, the elder brother of Antiochus Epiphanes, violently seized the reins of government, killed Lysias, and, at the suggestion of Alcimus, sent his general, Bacchides, to Judea, to avenge the honor of the Syrian throne. Defeated in his first attempt, he sent a fresh army, under Nicanor. But Judas again, with only three thousand, routed and killed him at a place near Beth-horon, completely annihilating his army of nine thousand. This was the crowning success of Judas' career, and ever afterwards this victory was celebrated as "Nicanor's Day" (cf. 1 Macc. 7:49).

3. It was at this juncture that Judas felt the necessity of securing separate political and national independence from the Syrian Empire. He accordingly sent two Jewish ambassadors to Rome, to negotiate a treaty. But before the treaty could be ratified by the Senate, Demetrius had commissioned Bacchides to return to Judea with an immense army. "The repeated appearance of large armies began to wear upon the spirit of the Jews." Judas' fol-

lowers all forsook him, except eight hundred, and even they tried hard to dissuade him from fighting. But Judas would not desert his cause; accordingly, in a final battle at Eleasa, not far west of Bethel (see map, page 224), the great Jewish warrior met his fate (April, 161 B. C.). His corpse was rescued and buried in the family sepulchre at Modein.

4. "Like the English Harold, at Hastings, the hero died at bay, fighting to the last. His whole life was passed in struggles for freedom, and in fighting the battles of his country; but his personal ambition was never gratified by any dignity bestowed on him. Jonathan, his brother, became high priest in 153 B. C; but for Judas no such reward was in store, and he was content to remain the military chief and political leader, without title and without formal recognition" (Conder).

Recall the causes, victories and results of the Maccabean uprising.

## STUDY XXIV.

### Jesus Christ.

*1st Day: Political Independence Gained and Lost* (142-63 B. C.).

Glance over 1 Macc. 9—16; Josephus' *Antiquities,* XIII.

1. When Judas died, the Maccabean struggle for political independence was continued by Jonathan, his younger brother. Jonathan was a diplomat. He set up a rival government at Michmash, and was the first Maccabee to be made high priest (153 B. C.). He thus became "the real founder of the Maccabean state." His end was tragic.

2. Simon, the last surviving member of Mattathias' family, succeeded Jonathan. "It was given to Simon to put the copestone on the work which had been begun and developed by the other members of his house" (Fairweather). His crowning task was the capture of Akra, the citadel of Jerusalem. This victory gave the Jews independent nationality (142 B. C.). Peace and prosperity followed. Simon was "the David of his age." But Simon, like all his brothers, met a violent death.

3. His son, John, surnamed Hyrcanus, succeeded him, and for thirty years (135-105 B. C.) reigned over a kingdom almost as extensive as Solomon's. But by his indifference to the priesthood he completely alienated the *Chasidim,* who were now known as Pharisees. From his time onward the Maccabean dynasty rapidly degenerated.

4. Aristobulus was John's son and successor. He is celebrated because he was the first to call himself "king

of the Jews." During the one brief year of his reign Galilee was added to the Jewish state. His brother and successor, Alexander Jannæus, was, perhaps, the most profligate king and high priest in all Jewish history. He ruled for twenty-six years (104-78 B. C.). From him the Pharisees turned away in utter disgust, and longed for deliverance from self-government.

5. Very soon, however, the reins of government fell into the Pharisees' hands and they rejoiced. Alexander's widow, Alexandra-Salome, ruled in strict accordance with their principles for nine years after his death. These years are frequently spoken of as "a truly golden age." Upon her death, bitter strife ensued, and the Maccabean, or Hasmonean, dynasty hastened to its end. The Romans were invited to act as arbiters. Pompey responded, but at the cost of Jewish independence. Many thousands of Jews were either massacred or deported to Rome. "Thus the independence of the Jewish nation, which had lasted for nearly eighty years, was brought to an end" (Ottley).

Through Pompey's transportation of the Jews to the banks of the Tiber, note how, in the Providence of God, he really became the unconscious founder of the Roman Church.

*2d Day: The Roman Period till Christ* (63-4 B. C.).

Consult Josephus' *Antiquities,* XIV-XVII.

1. The destinies of Rome, henceforth, determined the fate of the Jews. Julius Cæsar generously allowed them to restore the walls of Jerusalem, which Pompey had thrown down. From 40 to 37 B. C. a certain Antigonus, the last representative of the Maccabean family, nominally ruled over Judea as king and priest. But while he was still in authority, the Roman senate appointed the Idumean Herod as king over Judea, and bade him conquer it. Herod did so, "sparing neither age nor sex." He ruled from 37 to 4 B. C. See diagram (page 235).

2. Herod was politic and born to rule. He was careful to keep the friendship of the Romans at any cost. The Jews, accordingly, doubted his motives. Even his splendid restoration of the Temple was not appreciated by them, because they dared not trust him. Yet some did, and formed a party known as the Herodians. See Mark 12:13.

3. Commerce flourished during Herod's reign, but his government was thoroughly bad. His own heart was black with crime. It was he who slaughtered the children of Bethlehem, in order to put the infant Jesus to death. See Matt. 2:1-16. His reign is "perhaps the most convincing evidence that there are powers which are stronger than crown or sword, and that violence avails nothing against the spirit" (Cornill).

4. "But the importance of Herod's life does not end with his personal history. He created, in great part, that Palestine which served as the platform on which the closing scenes of the Jewish and the opening scenes of the Christian church were to be enacted" (Stanley).

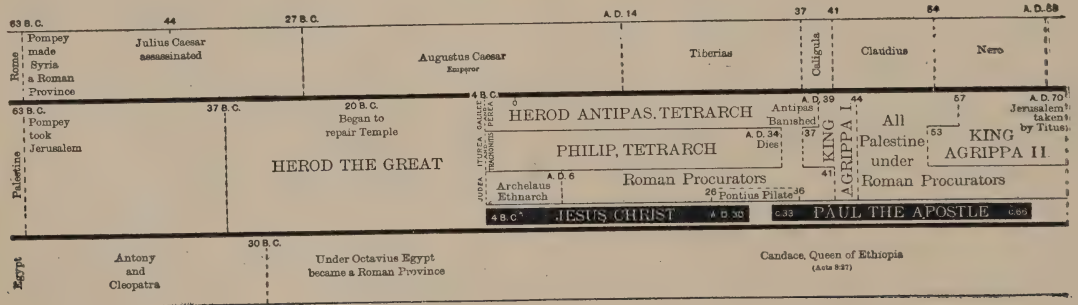
According to John 2:20, how many years were spent in building the Temple of Christ's day?

### 3*d Day: The Times of Jesus* (4 B. C.—30 A. D.).

Glance over Josephus' *Antiquities,* XVIII; *Wars of the Jews,* II, 1-9.

1. Herod the Great bequeathed his kingdom to his sons as follows: to Archelaus, Judea, Samaria and Idumea; to Herod Antipas, Galilee and Perea; to Philip, the district of the northeast. (See diagram and map.) Philip was kind to his subjects and ruled as tetarch thirty-seven years. Herod Antipas founded Tiberias, but is specially remembered because he beheaded John the Baptist (Matt. 14:3). Christ once spoke of him as "that fox" (Luke 13:32). He ruled as tetrarch forty-three years. Archelaus was a miserable tyrant, who, after a cruel reign of nine years as ethnarch, was banished.

# THE ROMAN PERIOD



2. Thereafter, Judea was governed by a Roman procurator who was directly subject to the imperial legate of Syria. The Jews had long desired this form of government, but they soon discovered that the Roman yoke was heavier than they anticipated. For the next sixty years these Roman representatives took a fiendish delight in showing their contempt for the Jews.

3. In due time a new party sprang into existence, known as the Zealots, who resisted vigorously Roman tyranny. More and more the Jews became divided into various rival factions. The strict Pharisees and their ascetic allies, the Essenes, were pitted against the Sadducees and Herodians, who were liberal in both law and religion. Their hatred for one another grew more and more intense to the very end of the drama.

4. One of these Roman procurators was Pontius Pilate, who is especially famous for having tormented the Jews from 26 to 36 A. D. The Jews, in return, hated him most cordially; and that, too, in spite of his having yielded to their desire to have Jesus condemned to death. See John 19:15, 16. He was insulting, abusive and barbarously cruel. For example, in suppressing a certain insurrection that had broken out in the Temple, he mingled the blood of the offending Galileans with their sacrifices. See Luke 13:1. His treatment of the Samaritans was so outrageous that they finally accused him to the emperor, who suspended him from office.

Point out the illegalities in Pilate's condemnation of Jesus. See Matt. 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, and John 18:28—19:16. Despite his wicked character, the Abyssinian Church, on the basis of Matt. 27:24, has canonized Pilate as a "Saint."

*4th Day: The Birth of Jesus Christ* (4 B. C.).

Read Matt. 2; Luke 2.

1. "The appearance of Christ amongst men was the greatest event in human history; the relations of God to

man and of man to God and of man to man underwent a change" (Vallings). His advent had long before been foretold. The "seed of the woman" (Gen. 3:15), the "sceptre" of Judah (Gen. 49:10), the "prophet" like unto Moses (Deut. 18:18), the "priest" after the order of Melchizedek (Ps. 110:4), the "prince of peace" (Isa. 8:6), the suffering "servant" (Isa. 53), the "branch of righteousness" (Jer. 33:15), the "shepherd" gathering his scattered sheep (Ezek. 34:12), the "stone" cut out of the mountains without hands (Dan. 2:45), the "king" riding into Jerusalem upon an ass (Zech. 9:9), and the "fountain" opened to the house of David for sin and for uncleanness (Zech. 13:1), are all adumbrations of the True Light which was one day to break upon the world. And this Messianic hope of Israel kept growing stronger and stronger until His actual advent. But, unfortunately, the Jews were looking for a Messiah who would wield a sword like Gideon, break the dominion of Rome, and reestablish the kingdom of Israel.

2. Concerning the details of His early life, we know comparatively little. This is doubtless providential, to teach us to avoid the mistake of supposing "that we know Him in knowing the date of His birth and of His death and the outward circumstances of His life: He is to stand before us simply in his work" (Cornill).

3. He was the "Son of man" as well as the "Son of God." He occupies a conspicuous place in the history of the Hebrews, because He is their culmination and consummate flower. Though He failed to influence, to any large extent, His own nation, yet, as Jean Paul has eloquently said, "With His pierced hand He has lifted empires off their hinges, turned the stream of centuries out of its channels, and still governs the ages." Most men are the product of their nationality, but Jesus "was not the outgrowth of His times, but their antithesis" (Lorimer). He even antagonized the dominating spirit of His

times. His first recorded words are an index to His whole life and character. Look up Luke 2:49.

Whence the origin of the expression "Son of Man"? See Ezek. 2:1; Dan. 7:13.

*5th Day: Jesus, the Greatest of Israel's Leaders.*

Read Matt. 5—7.

1. "Never man spake like this man" was the verdict of the "officers" concerning Jesus. See John 7:46. "He taught them as one having authority and not as their scribes," was likewise the testimony of the multitudes who had listened to that marvelous discourse known as "the Sermon on the Mount."

2. In that famous discourse we have the essence of His teaching. He begins with an octave of "Blesseds" upon those who would live the ideal life. Blessed are those who are without worldly ambition, who mourn on account of their sins, who bear injuries without resentment, who intensely long for character, who are forgiving and sympathetic, who are deeply sincere and are not satisfied with outward correctness, who promote peace, and who patiently endure reproach (Matt. 5:3-10). All such are to be congratulated, because they live the ideal life.

3. He then goes on to show the relation of the new Gospel form to the old Jewish standards. Jesus came not to destroy, but to unify and complete. The Gospel does not supersede the Law. The Old Testament is not to be abrogated by the New. Rather, as Augustine has suggested,

"The New is in the Old *con*-tained,
The Old is in the New *re*-tained,
The New is in the Old *con*-cealed,
The Old is in the New *re*-vealed,
The New is in the Old *en*-folded,
The Old is in the New *un*-folded."

4. The glory of the Gospel is that it "magnified the Law and made it honorable" in the eyes of the Gentiles. See Isa. 42:21. Christ recognized that the new wine was bursting the old bottles when the Greeks came requesting to "see Jesus." Look up John 12:21. The logical development of Christianity out of Judaism was, later, set forth more fully by the Apostle Paul, especially in his simile of the wild olive branch (the Gentiles) which has been grafted, contrary to nature, into the good olive tree (the Jews). See Rom. 11:24.

"In the days of faithful Abraham,
Who from Ur was led to flee,
God selected from the nations
One peculiar family-tree.

"This tree He grafted as an olive,
With His own almighty hand,
Causing it to grow and flourish
In fair Canaan's fruitful land.

"But, alas! the branches withered
In the blight of unbelief;
From the stock they then were severed,
Not in anger, but in grief.

"Then our God, in His great mercy,
Grafted in the Gentile shoot;
Now the olives, wild by nature,
Draw their life from Hebrew root."

—*Isaac Alcuzer.*

*6th Day: From Jesus' Crucifixion to the Siege of Jerusalem* (30-66 A. D.).

Glance at Josephus' *Wars of the Jews*, II, 11-16.

1. With the death of the Emperor Tiberias, Judea's peace was practically at an end. Caligula indeed made Agrippa, a grandson of Herod the Great, "king" of his

uncle Philip's territory, and Claudius gave him the remainder of Palestine, so that in the year 41 A. D. there was once more a Jewish kingdom under a native ruler. (See page 235.) But "the three years of his dominion are the last bright spot in the history of the people of Israel" (Cornill). Even Agrippa, in order to please the Jews, persecuted the rising Christian Church, and had the apostle James beheaded. See Acts 12:2.

2. Agrippa died suddenly at Cæsarea (cf. Acts 12:23) and Judea passed again under the rule of Roman procurators, of whom several in succession vied with each other, as it were, in heaping insult upon their Jewish subjects (44-66 A. D.). Their terrible outrages drove the Jews to despair. Even Felix resorted to the most extreme forms of brutal violence, attacking the Zealots and sending their leader to Rome in chains. Another new party arose, called the *Sicarii*, who carried concealed daggers and assassinated all who sympathized with Rome. No wonder that Felix, who was largely responsible for such conditions, trembled when the great apostle reasoned before him at Cæsarea "of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come." See Acts 24:25.

3. Porcius Festus, who ruled about 60 A. D., was nobler; but his successors were little less than villains. Florus, especially, scourged and crucified the Jews without mercy. In a single day thirty-six hundred were condemned at his command. Bernice, King Agrippa's sister, went barefoot to him, to implore mercy for her people, but she was rudely insulted and turned away. The Jews could bear such atrocities no longer. They ordered the daily sacrifices in the Temple for the emperor to cease, which was equivalent to a declaration of war (66 A. D.).

Who was the greatest man in the Roman world about this time? See diagram.

*7th Day: The Siege and Fall of Jerusalem* (66-70 A. D.).

Consult Josephus' *Wars of the Jews,* III-VI.

1. We now come to the final act of the terrible drama. The saddest feature of Jerusalem's great catastrophe is the fact that the Jews turned upon one another, and butchered more of themselves than did the Romans. The ruin was complete.

2. The war party had their quarters in the Temple, while the peace party occupied the citadel of Akra. Blood flowed daily, and civil war raged in the streets of the besieged city. The Jews had made elaborate preparations, impressing even the historian Josephus into service, to drill the soldiers. But they were destined to be completely outmatched by Vespasian, a veteran warrior of the Romans, who was placed in command of sixty thousand of Rome's best troops.

3. Hostilities began in the year 67 A. D., and by the end of that year all Galilee was in the hands of the Romans. In 68 A. D. the entire region east of the Jordan, except Machærus, was conquered. Then Nero died and war was suspended for a year (69 A. D.). Vespasian was made emperor, and Titus, his son, was given command of the imperial forces in Palestine. He marched upon Jerusalem in the spring of 70 A. D., shortly before the Passover festival. The city was filled with Jewish pilgrims. Titus encamped on the Mount of Olives and began a systematic siege, blockading the city, throwing up defences and thundering with the battering ram, until, after many futile attempts, a breach was made in the outer wall, May 7th, and then in the second wall, May 16th. Famine began to be felt within the city. To escape death, many deserted to Titus, but were rewarded with tortures indescribable. "Crosses could not be found for all, and so Titus cut off their hands and drove them back into the city" (Josephus). Hundreds of thousands died of famine alone.

4. On July 2d the inner wall fell, and on July 5th still another new wall, which had been constructed during the siege. Only the Temple hill and the citadel remained to be taken. At last, on July 17th, the morning and evening sacrifices in the Temple, which had been kept up in spite of the famine throughout the siege, were suspended—never to be resumed. A soldier hurled a fagot through one of the open windows of the sacred edifice, and the sanctuary went up in flames. Titus barely rescued the holy vessels. Finally, on September 7th the walls of the citadel were scaled, and the destruction of Jerusalem was complete (70 A. D.) Of the one million one hundred thousand Jews who were imprisoned in Jerusalem during the siege, only seven hundred of the strongest were spared to grace the triumphal procession of Titus in Rome.

5. Thus the Jews lost forever their nationality. But they fell like heroes, and, even in their fall, they triumphed over their victors. "While Rome has long since passed away, and only ruins tell of its glory, Israel is still, after two thousand years, what it was. Rome, in a sense, has been conquered by Israel. For even Rome now confesses the supremacy of Jerusalem" (Cornill).

The Epistle to the Hebrews was probably written about 70 A. D. to encourage the Jewish Christians not to give up Christianity; the author's thesis being that Christianity is greater than Judaism, and that it is the complete, and final, and eternal religion; Jesus Christ being the same yesterday, to-day, and forever (Hebrews 13:3).

THE END.

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